2
STORY BY
JUNICHI FUJISAKU
ART BY
YUKI YOSHIMOTO
BASED ON *THE GHOST IN THE SHELL* BY
SHIROW MASAMUNE
THE GHOST IN THE SHELL
攻殻機動隊
THE HUMAN ALGORITHM

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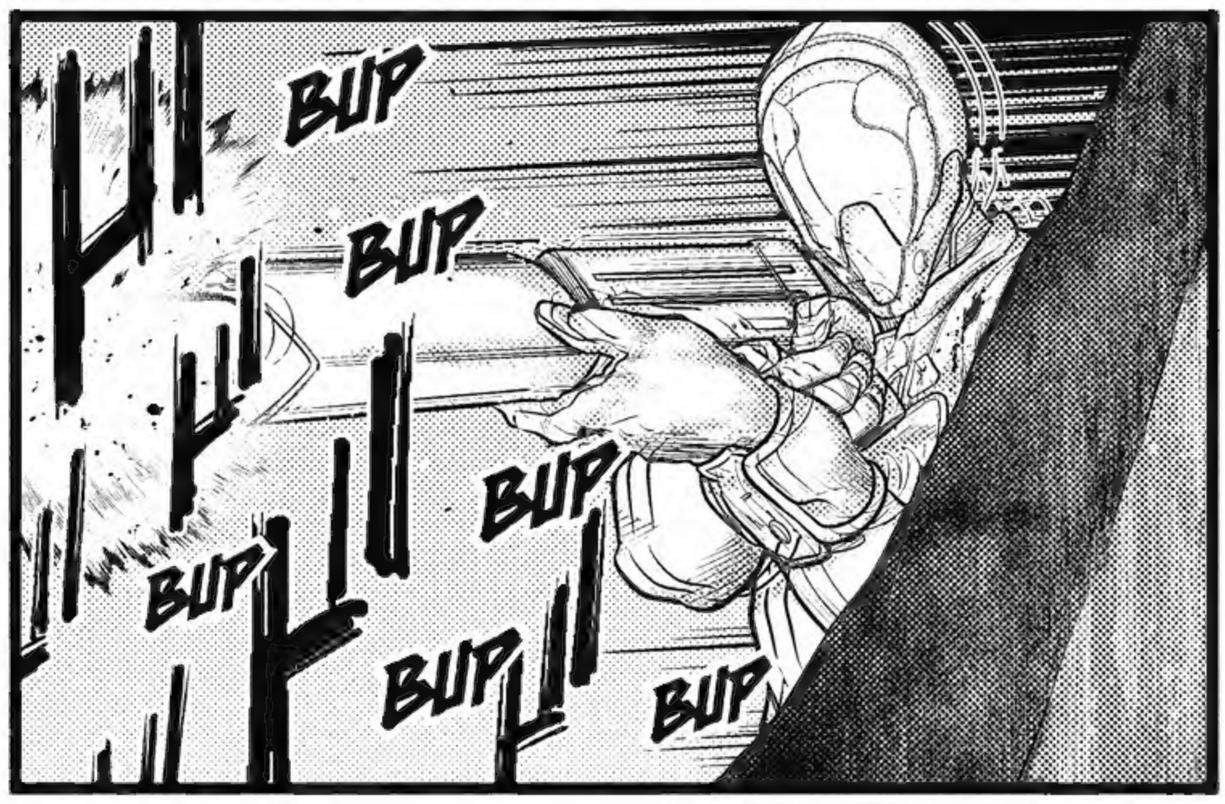
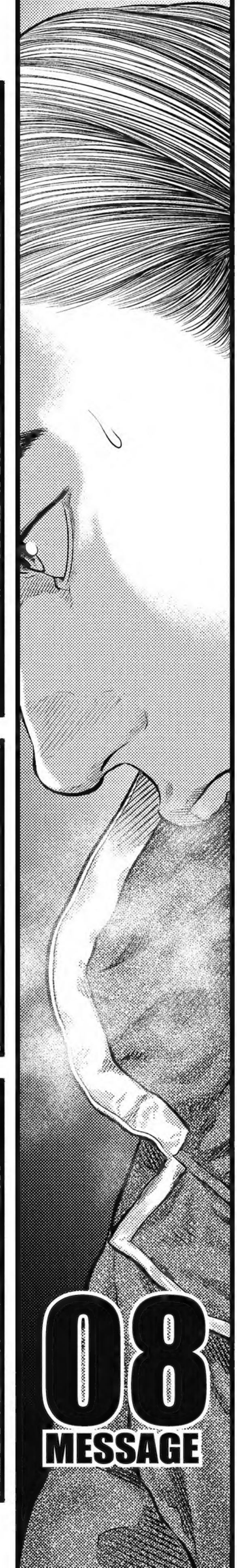

BUP
BUP
BUP
BUP
BUP
BUP

!!
KSH
KSH
KSH
KSH
KSH


08
MESSAGE

MAYBE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HE'S TRYING TO DO. HE WANTS HIS SQUADMATES OVER HERE.

DAMMIT...

IF HE KEEPS LAYING DOWN FIRE LIKE THAT, HE'S GONNA DRAW ATTENTION FROM—

?!

SLUMP

SHRRRRF...

KSH

KSH

KSH

KSH

TING

AZUMA! CIRCLE AROUND FROM BEHIND!

WE'RE GONNA SHUT THIS GUY UP FOR GOOD.

WE MOVE WHEN HE STOPS TO RE-LOAD!

PFF

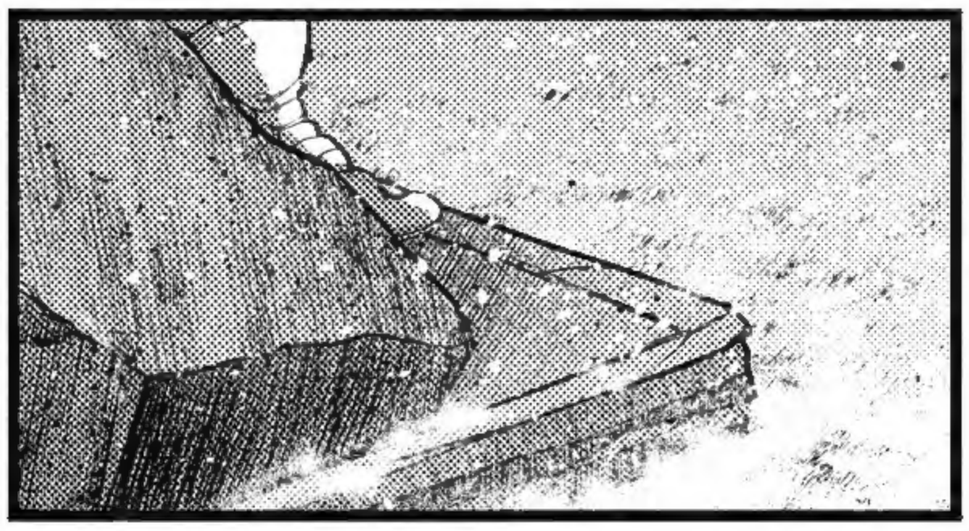
KSH

SOME-THING'S OFF. HE'S ACTING STRANGE ...

WAIT!

LET'S DO THIS!

FINALLY! SOUNDS LIKE HE'S OUT.



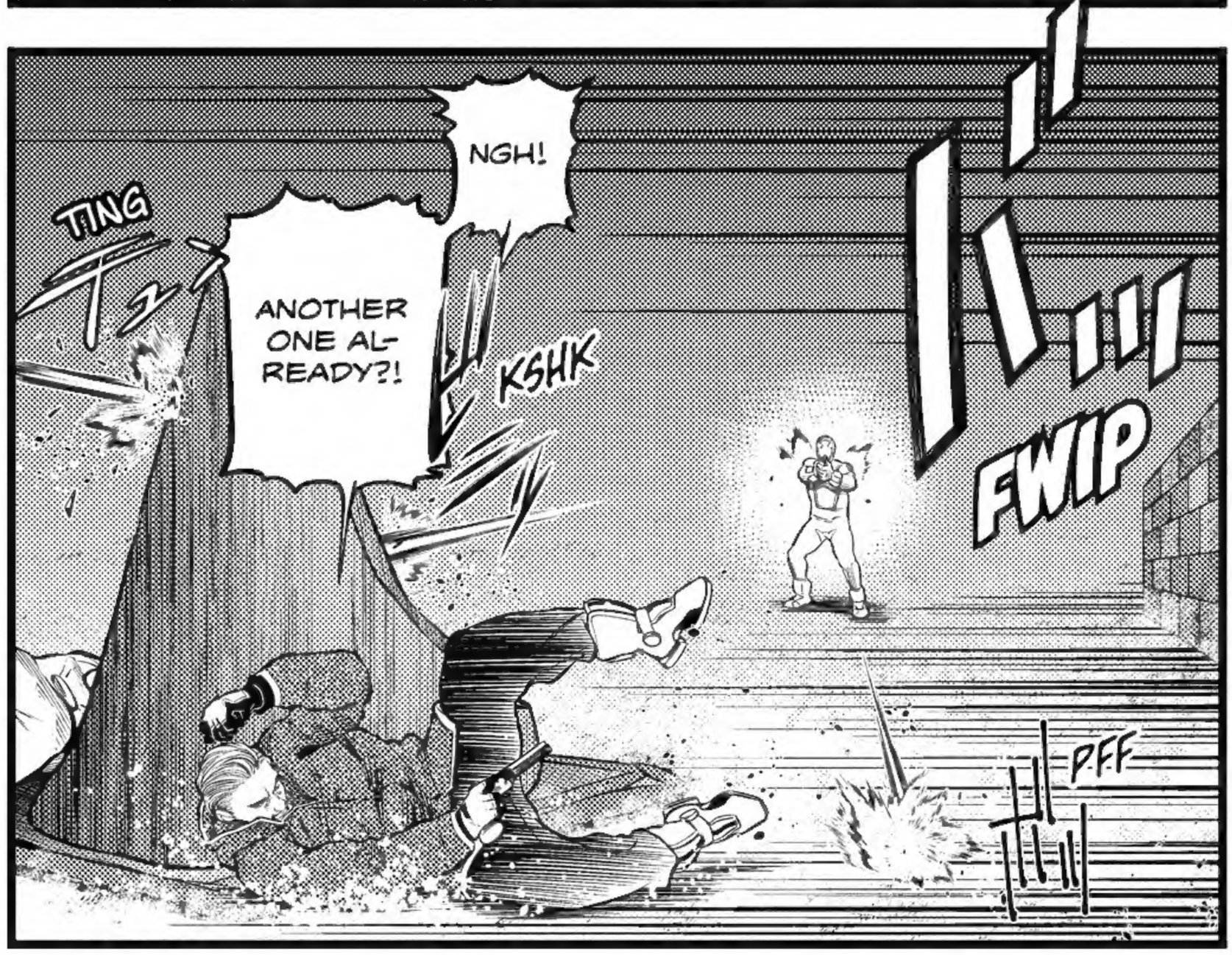
BEEEEEP
BEEEEEP
THMP

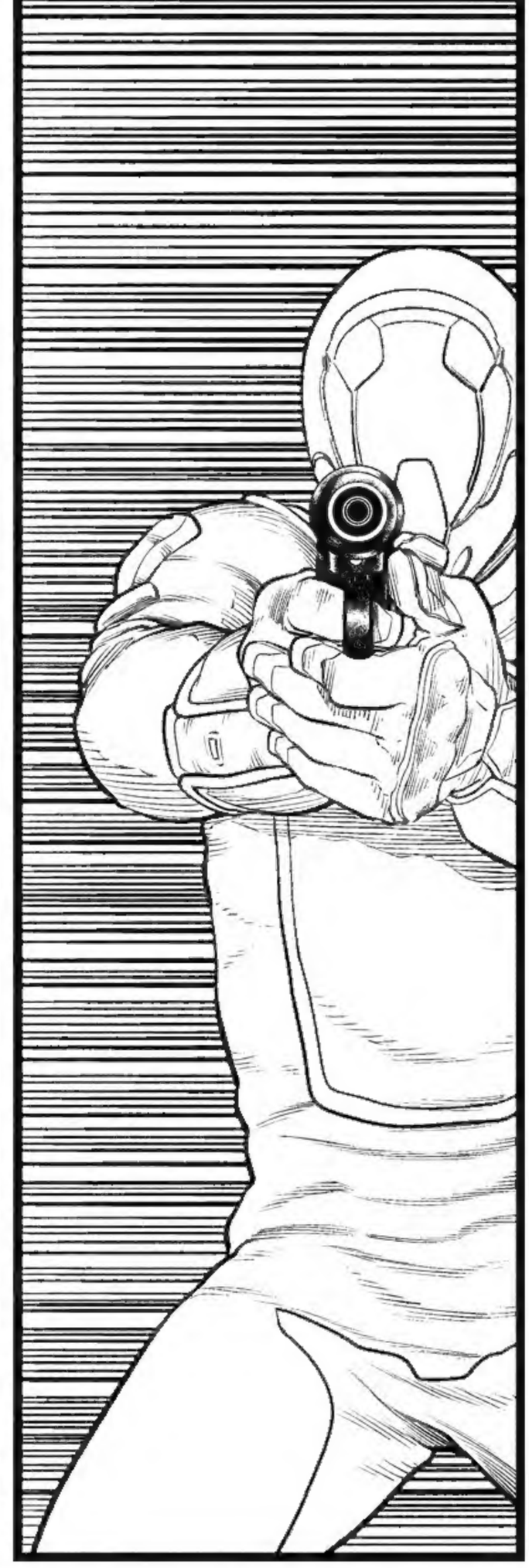
WOBBLE...
?!
KTHK
BLAM

AZUMA! COVER ME!
KCHK
DASH
YOU GOT IT.

BLAM
KA
SPLTCH

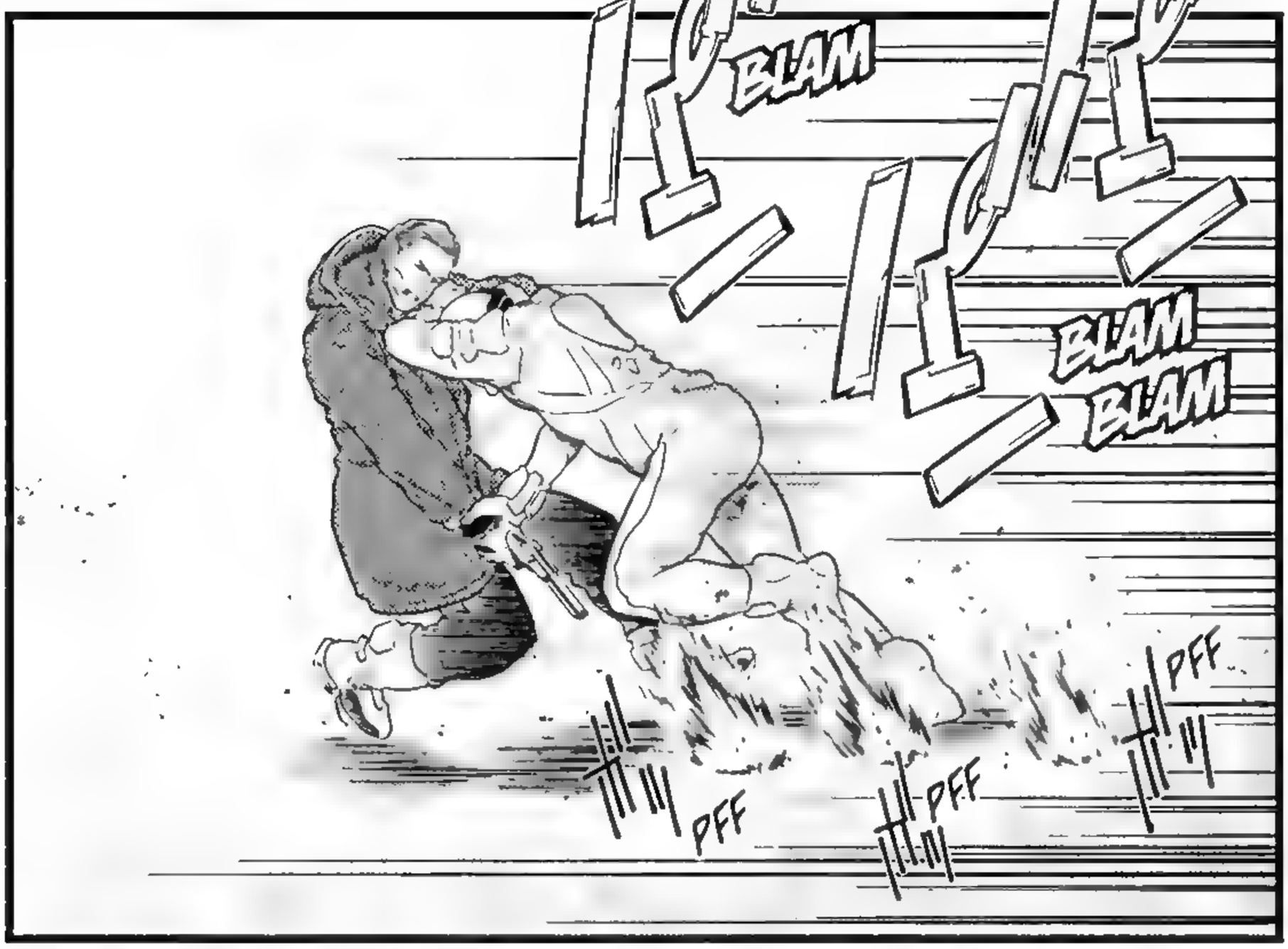
?!

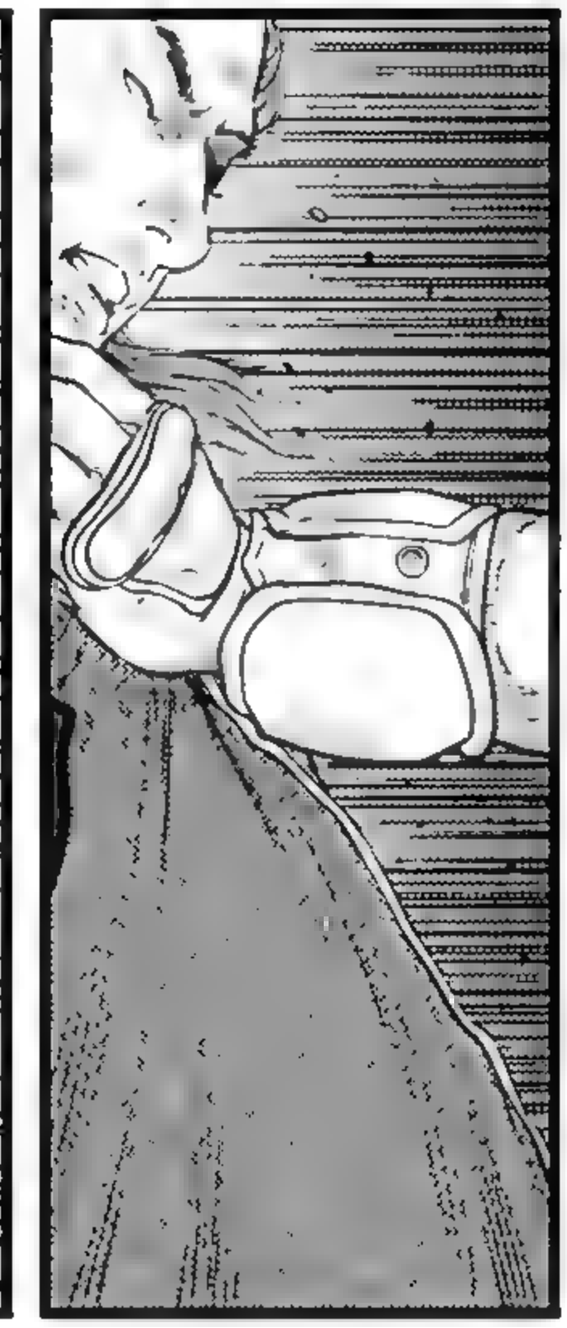

TING
NGH!
ANOTHER ONE AL-READY?!
KSHK
FWIP
PFF

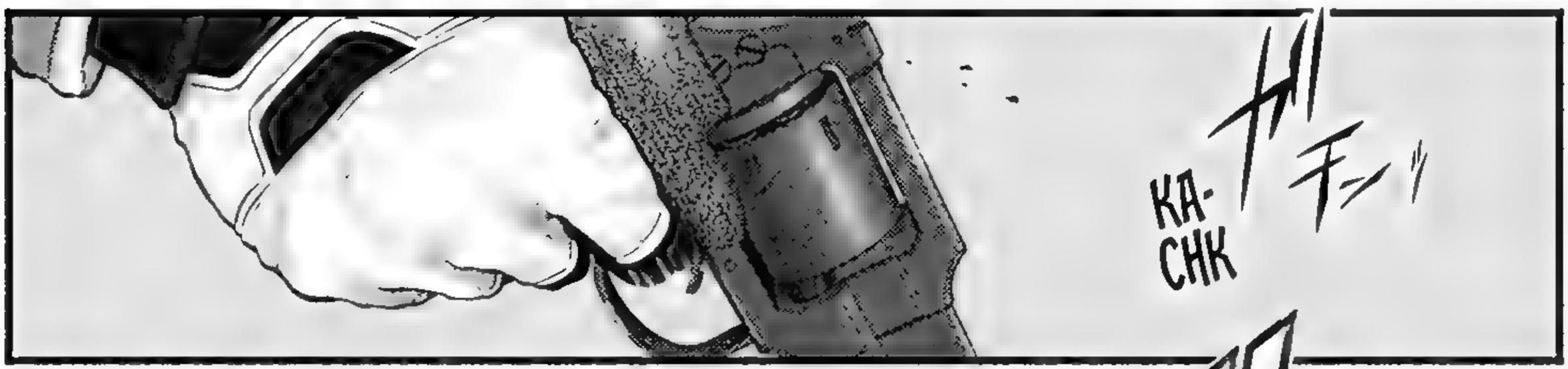


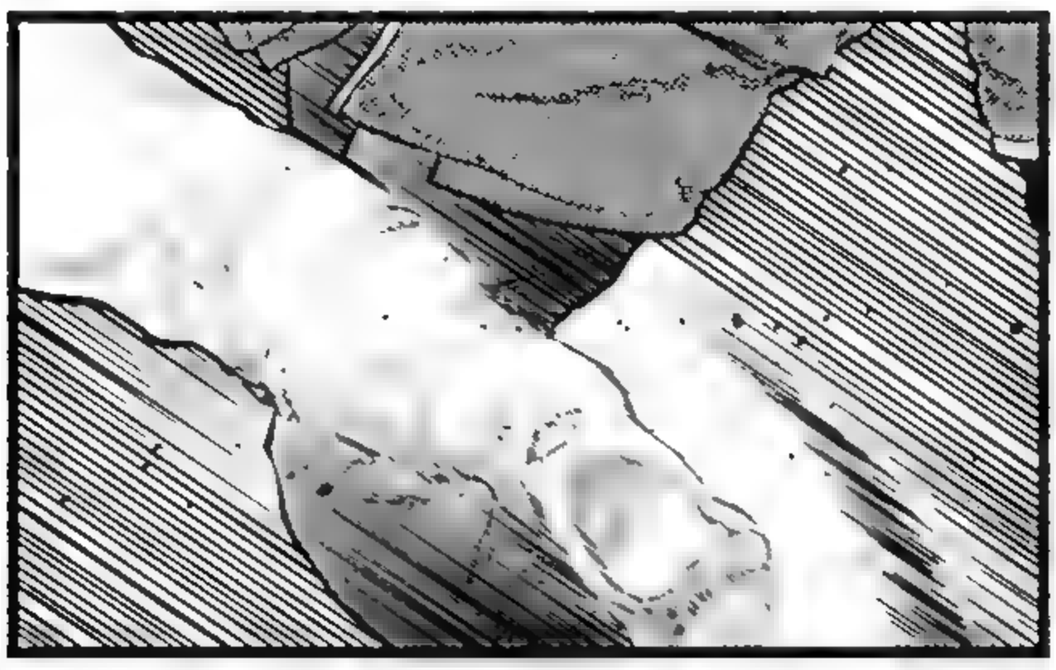
SHIT!
I'M OUT!

BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
PLINK
!!

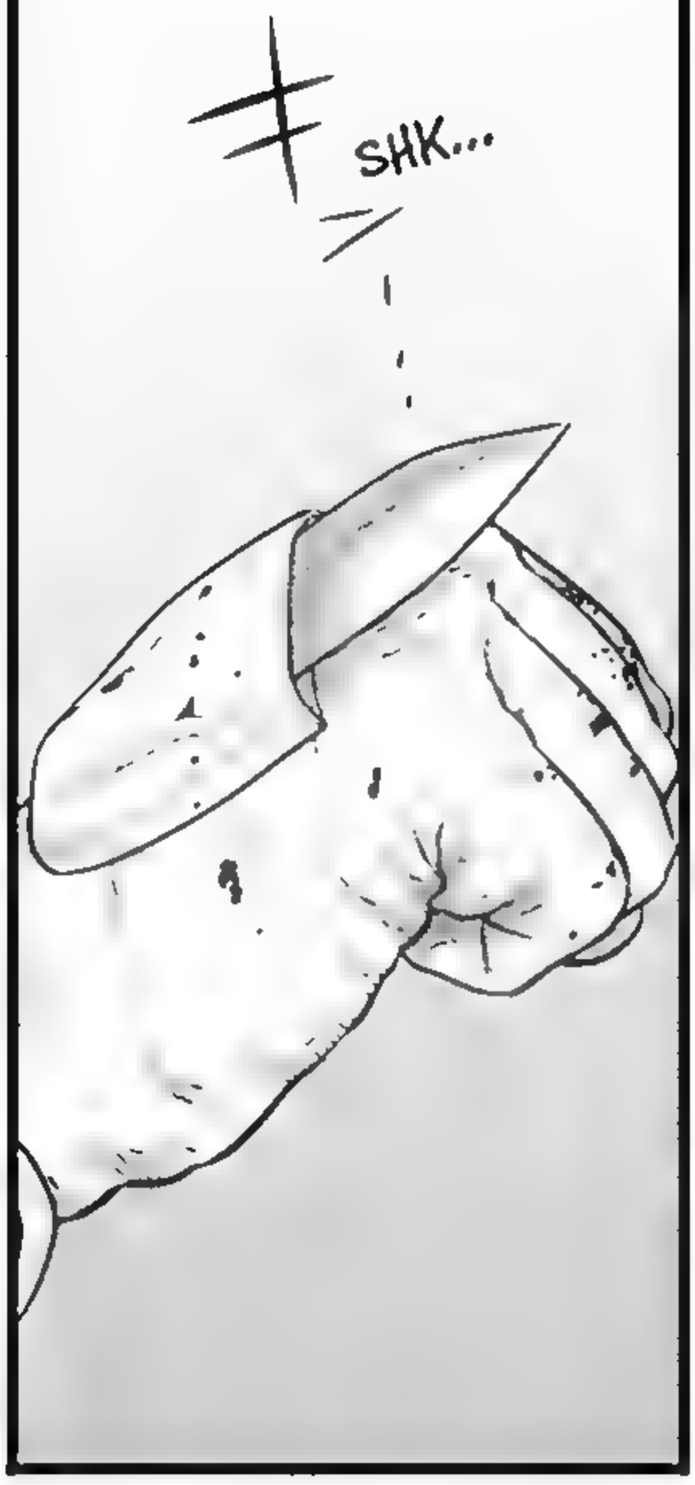

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
PFF
PFF
PFF

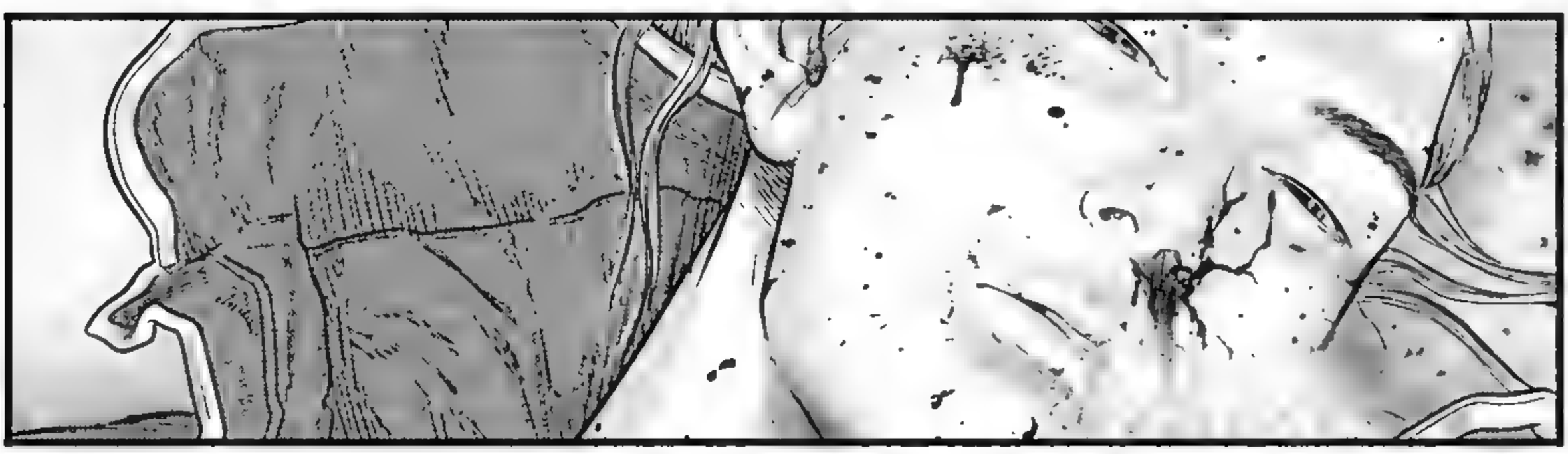


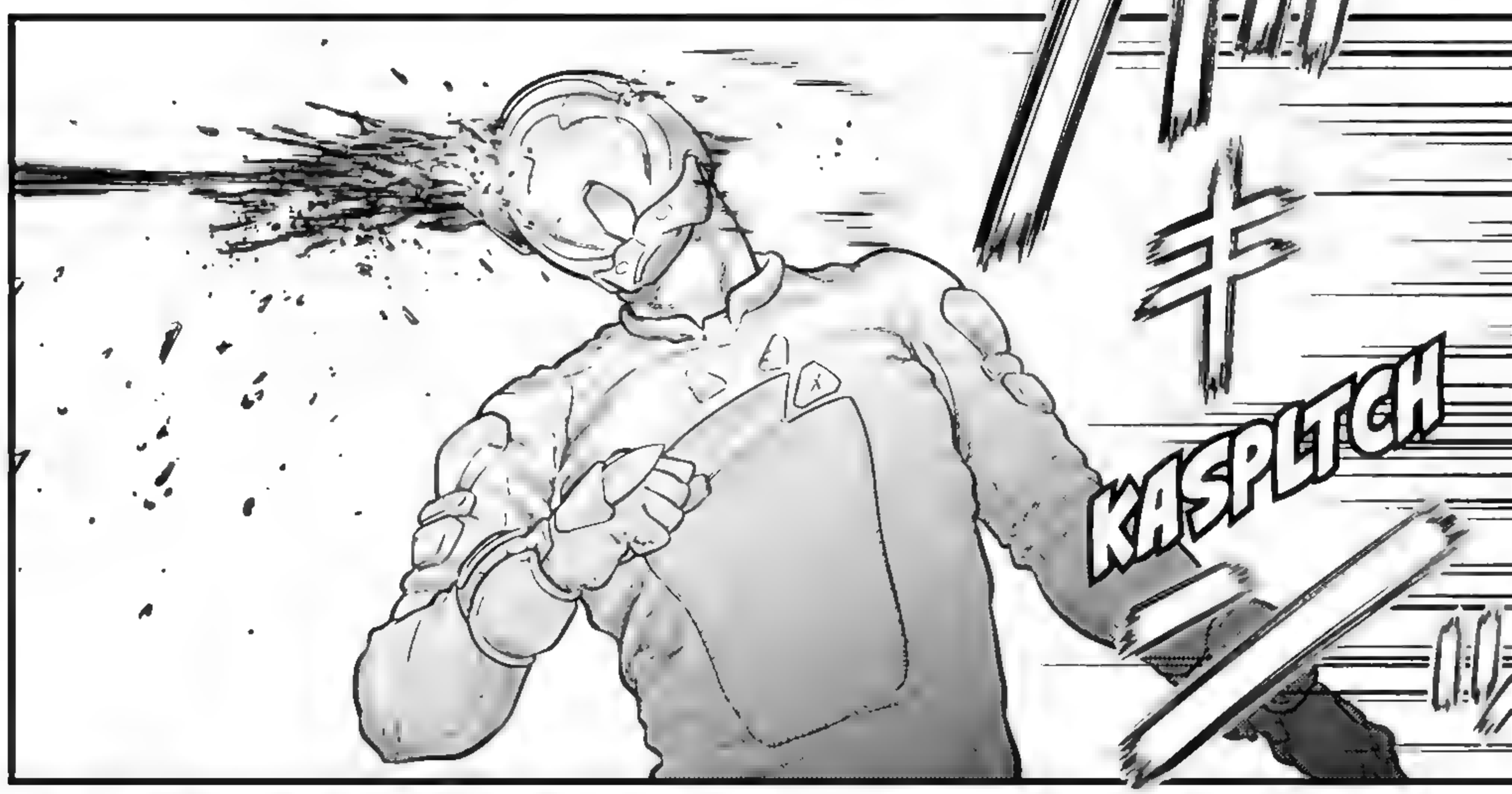

KA-
CHK
チャッ

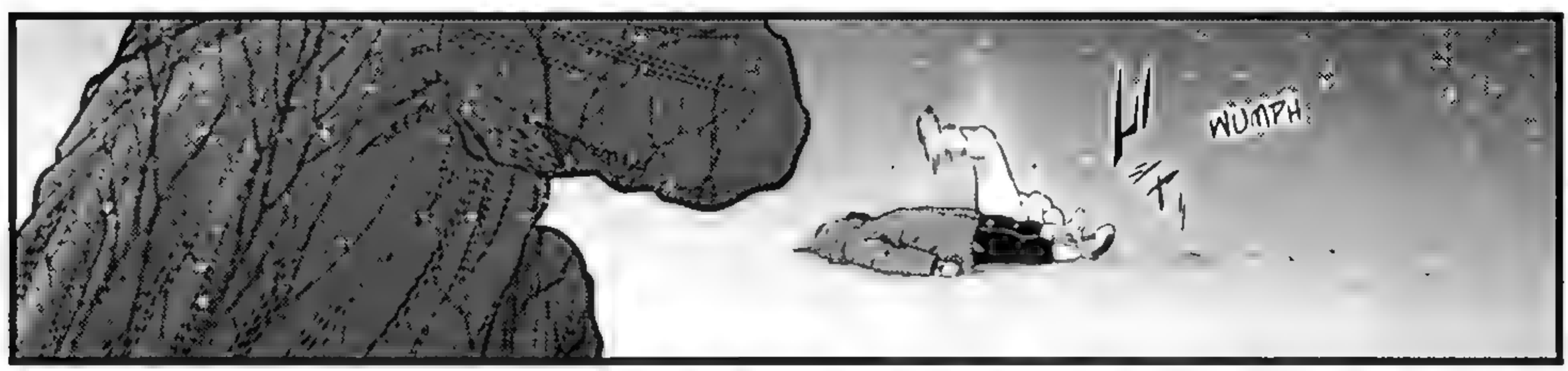


WHACK
WHAM
KRKK


SHK...



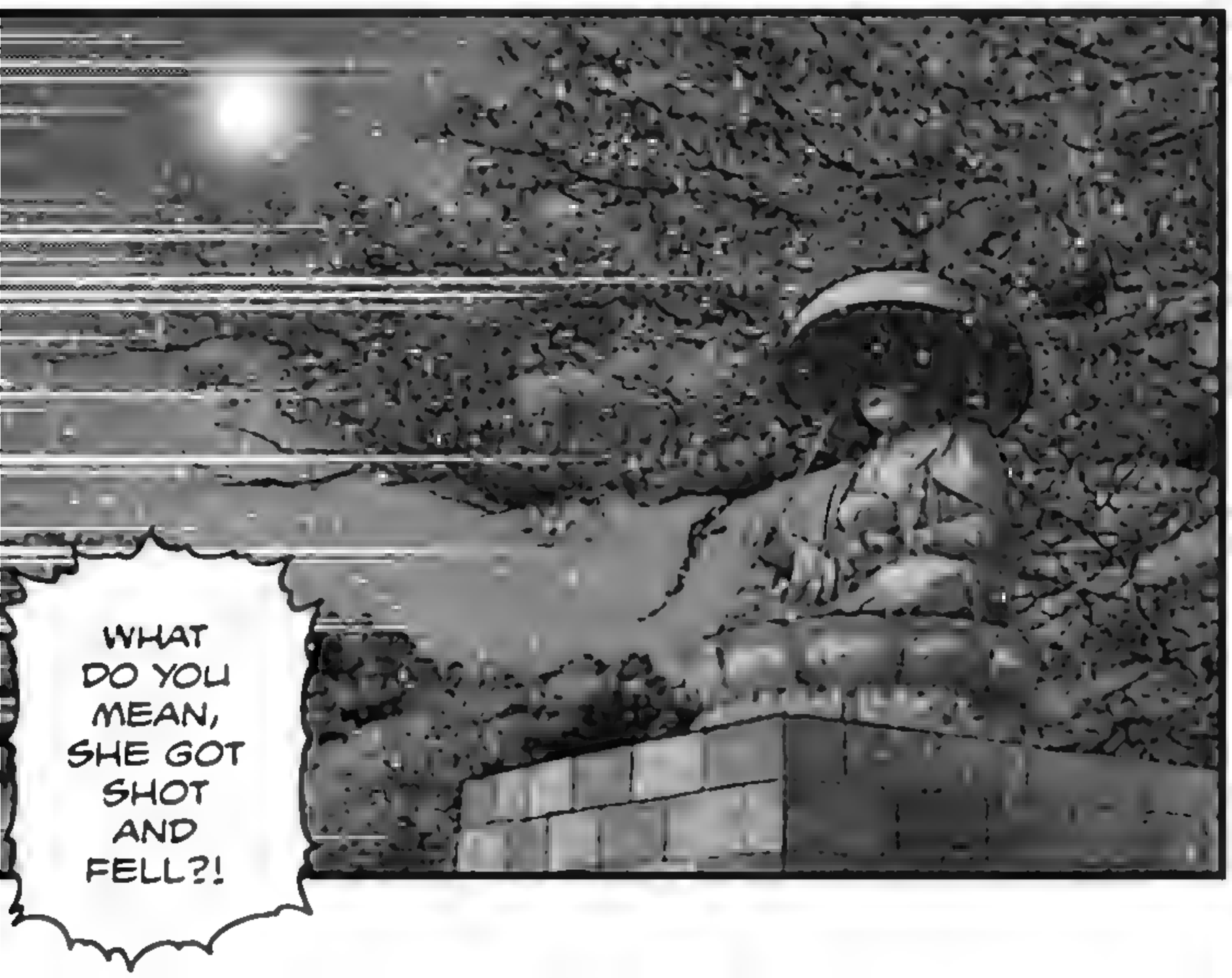

KASPLTCH


WUMPH

YOU ALL RIGHT?

YO. AZUMA. YOU ALIVE?

YEAH, I GOT IT. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE.



WE GOTTA GO FIND HER.

TSUNAGI DOESN'T HAVE THE EXPERIENCE TO SURVIVE ON HER OWN OUT HERE.

...WE DON'T KNOW WHERE THE BEAR IS, EITHER.

EASIER SAID THAN DONE. YOU GOT A PLAN?

IT'S TOO DARK. I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING DOWN THERE.

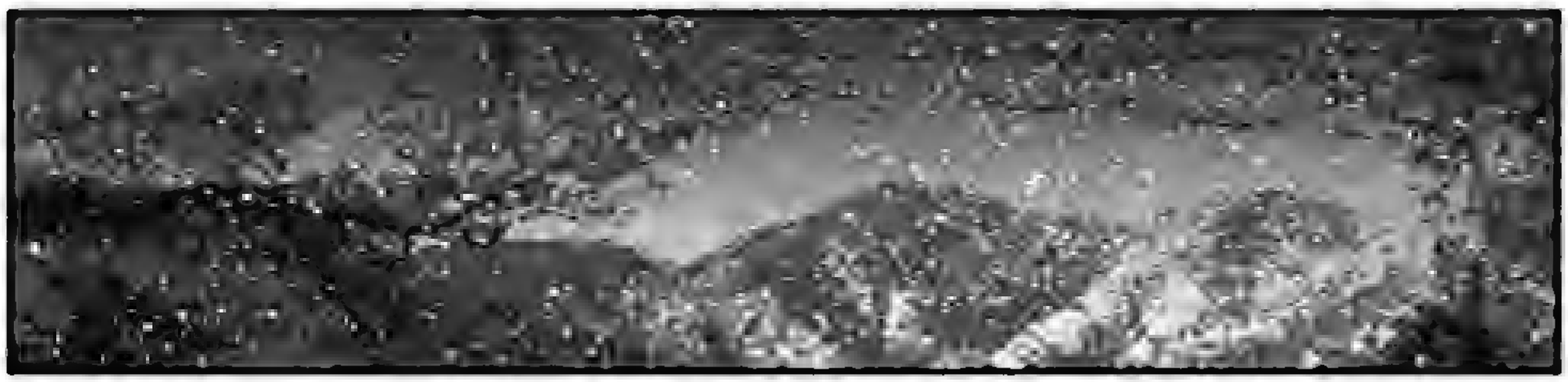
STILL GOT TWO GOONS UN-ACCOUNTED FOR. NOT TO MENTION...

LOOKS LIKE HE'S GONE ALL SOFT ON US, HASN'T HE?

HEY. YOU SERI-OUS?

I'M AWARE. THANKS.

JUST DON'T BLAME ME WHEN THIS ALL GOES SOUTH.



BEEEEEEP
BEEEEEEP

AT LEAST WE GOT THE DATA. WITH THIS USB, ATERUI'S DONE FOR.

WE GOT COCKY.

RELIED TOO MUCH ON THESE HIGH-OUTPUT PROSTHETICS.

GIVEN THE TEMPERATURE, WE'RE ALL GONNA HAVE DEAD BATTERIES SOON.

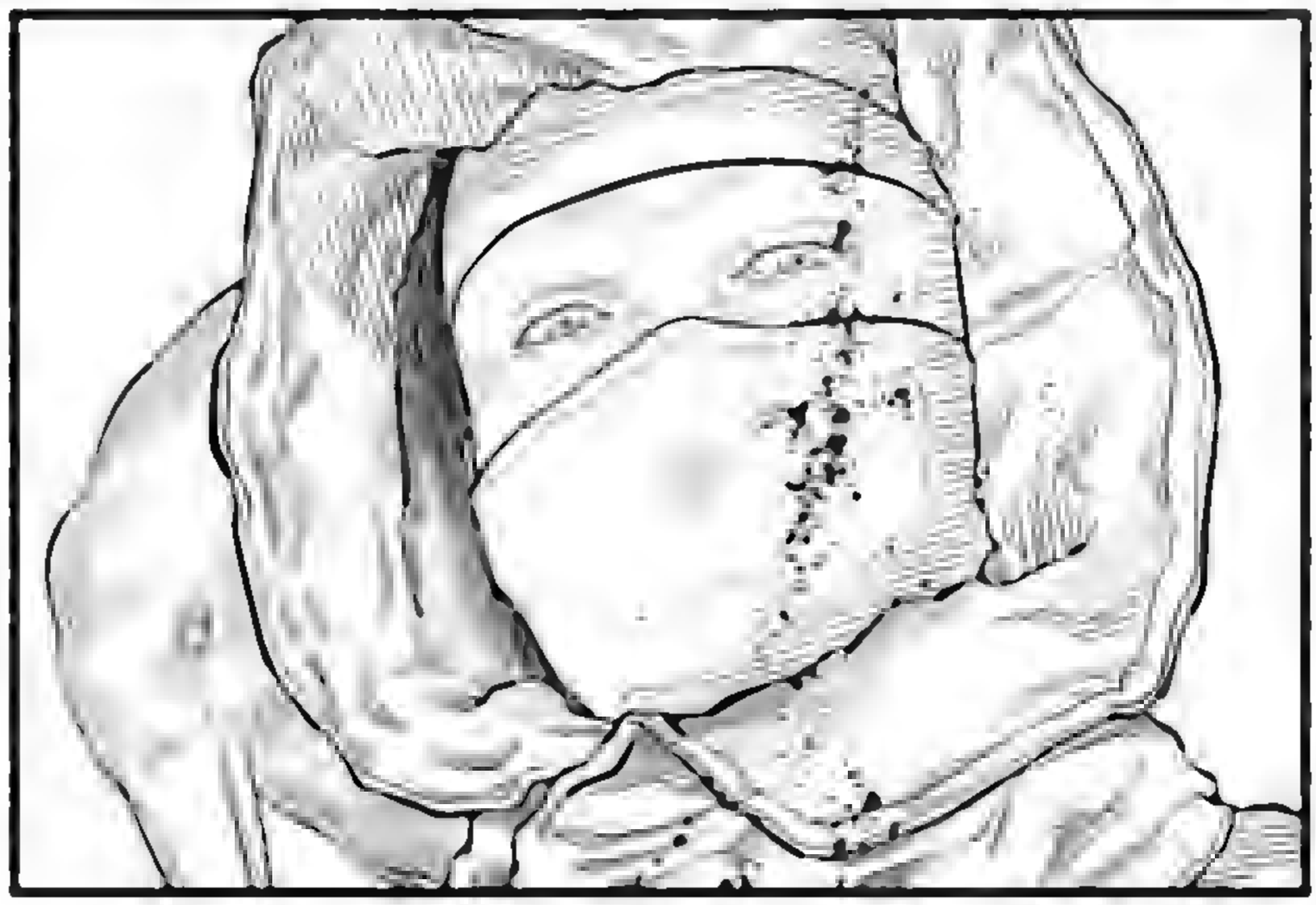
...NO. THAT'S NOT TRUE. IT WAS THAT BASTARD IN WHITE. WAY MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR.

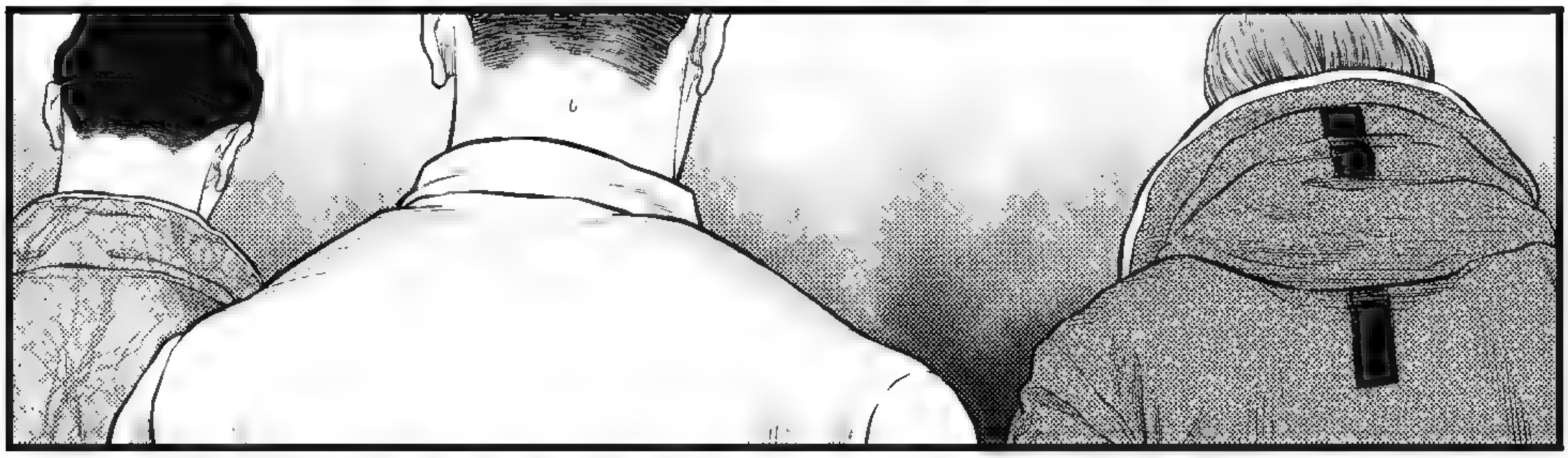
ACTIVATE BEACON.

IT'S ME. REQUESTING EMERGENCY EVACUATION. I'M ENTERING SHUTDOWN MODE HERE AND—

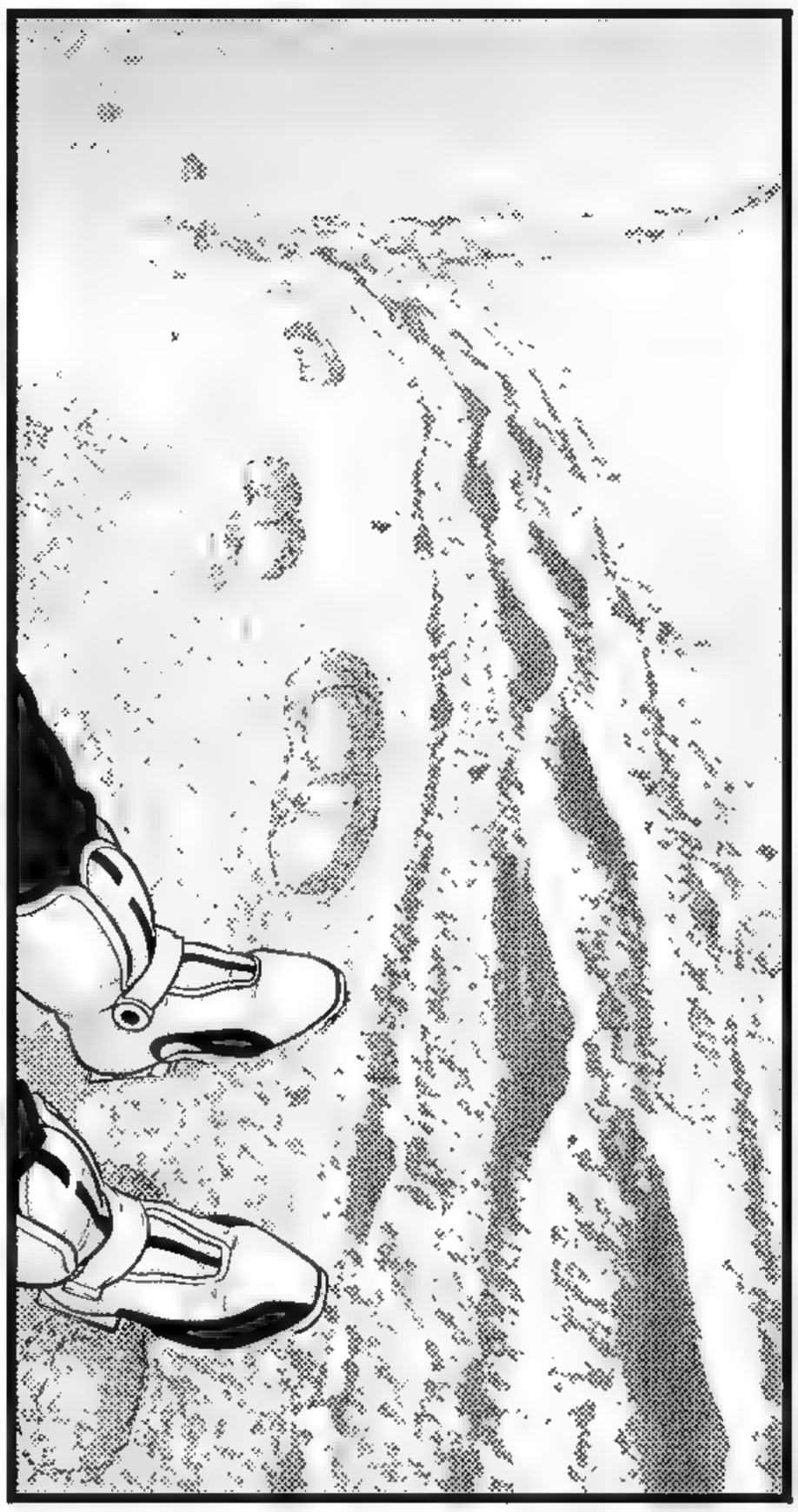
USER ID CODE

LIKE A DEMON STRAIGHT OUTTA HELL...





THE HELL?
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE WAS DRAGGED OFF.



I MEAN, IF IT WAS, HE'D HAVE KILLED HER ON THE SPOT. RIGHT?!
YOU DON'T THINK... IT WASN'T THE *BEAR*, WAS IT?!

THAT IS, AS LONG AS WE'RE FIGHTING ANYTHING REMOTELY HUMAN.

SAITO, WHAT'S OUR GEAR SITUATION?
ENOUGH TO GET THE JOB DONE.

HEY!

WAA-AH...
WHERE IS EVERY-BODY?

OH, GEEZ. I WAS SO SCARED!
DASH

T-TOGUSA! OVER HEEEE-ERE!!

FWSH...

HUH?

WHAT ...?

PLEASE TELL ME I'M NOT SITTING ON THE SAI...

...THE BANK ALONG THE RIVER OF THE DEAD.

BUT... WHAT ABOUT MY LIFELINE? WHERE'S MY SILVER CORD?!

AM I HAVING AN OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE?

FWIP

WHERE... WHERE AM I?

SOME KIND OF RIVER-BANK?

WAIT. NO. TELL ME IT'S NOT THE SANZU.

DON'T LEAVE ME!

TOGUSA! GUYS!

FRSHHH

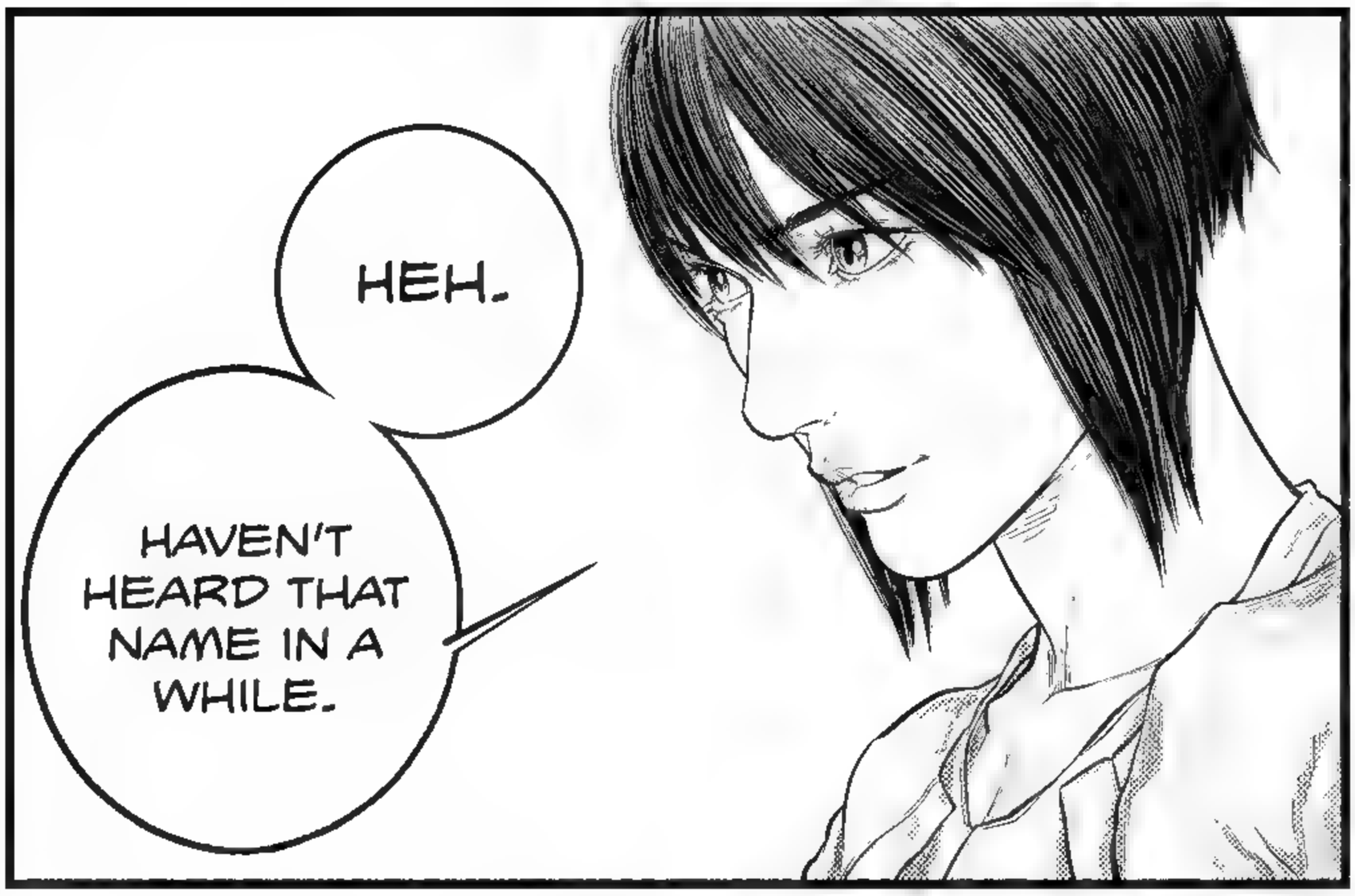
NO! I DON'T WANNA DIE!

?!

OH, DEAR. ARE YOU LOST, LITTLE GIRL?

IS IT REALLY YOU...?
MAJOR KUSANAGI!

SO YOU'RE SOME-ONE ELSE?


HEH.
HAVEN'T HEARD THAT NAME IN A WHILE.

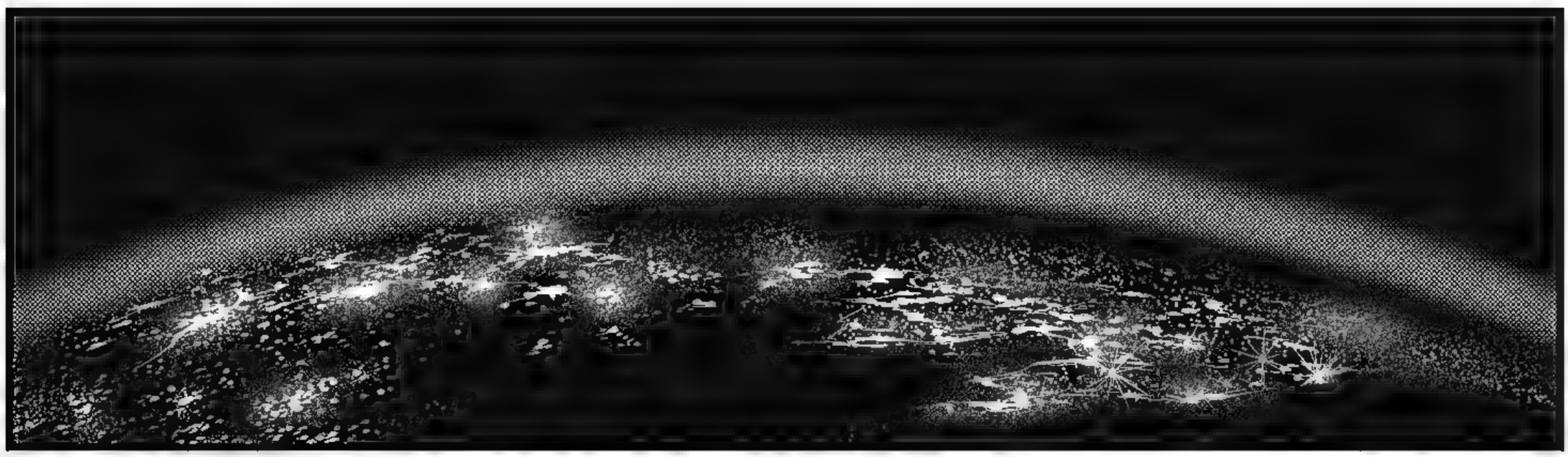
GLUP

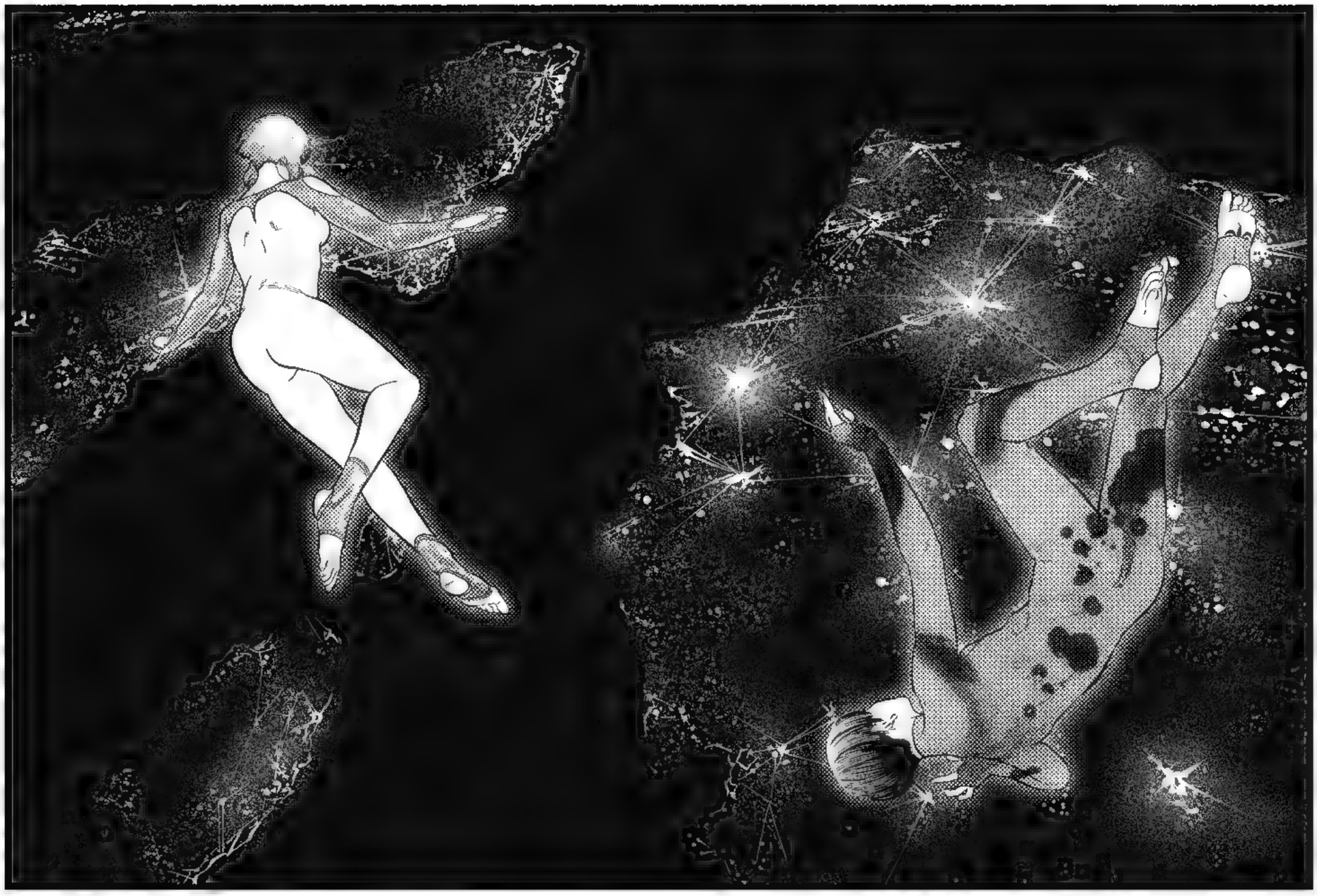
IN A SENSE.

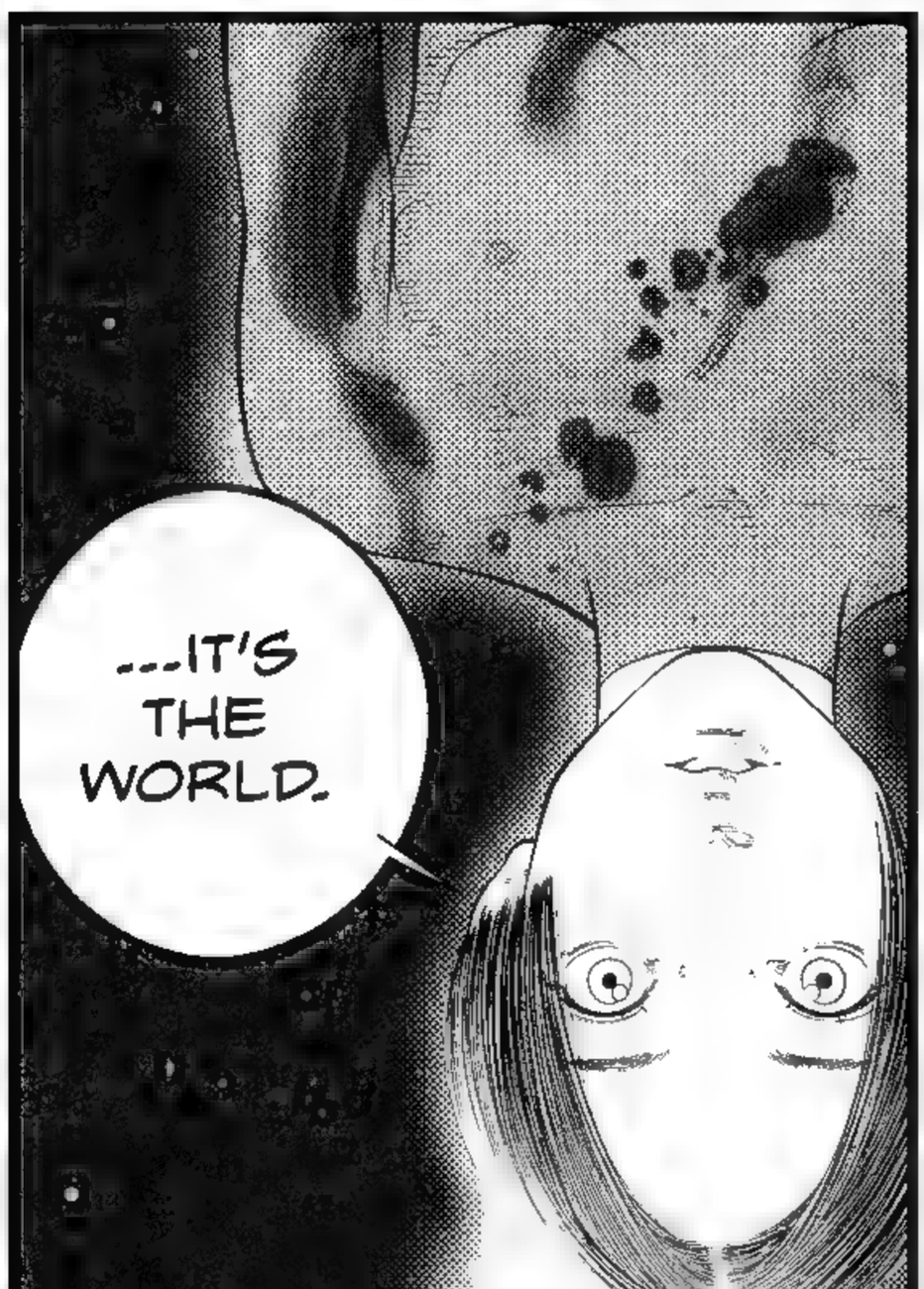
AND YET, IN A SENSE NOT.

I AM WHO YOU SAY.
ALL FUSED TOGETHER, ONE BY ONE.
AND AT THE SAME TIME, I AM OTHERS.

AND ONWARD WE MARCH, IN SEARCH OF SINGULAR ANSWER!






...IT'S THE WORLD.

TELL ME. WHAT DO YOU SEE?

OUR CRADLE, IF YOU WILL.

...IS A COSMIC SEED.

NOT QUITE. WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT...

LAY OFF! AND HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING, ANYWAY?!

HEY!

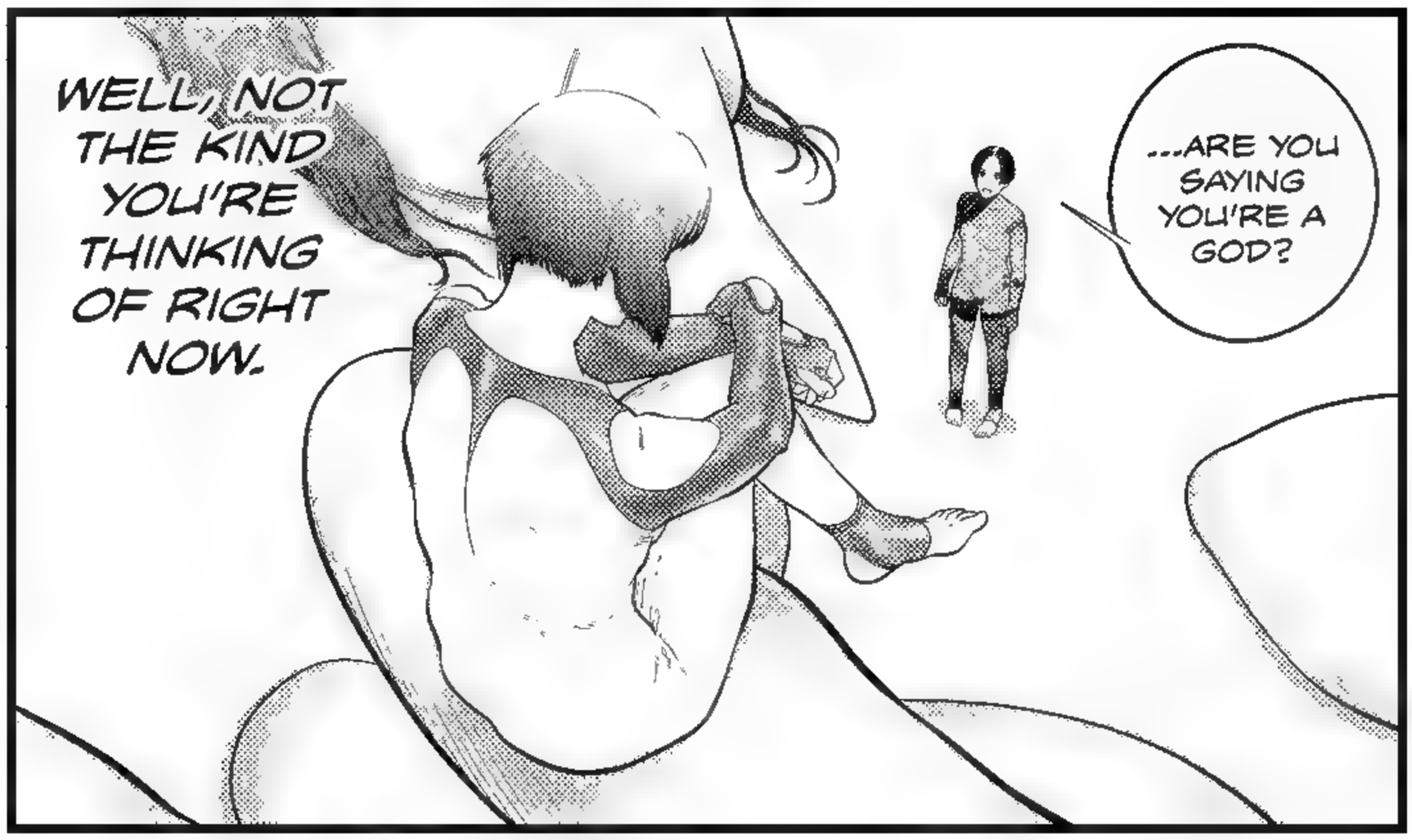
ROCK...

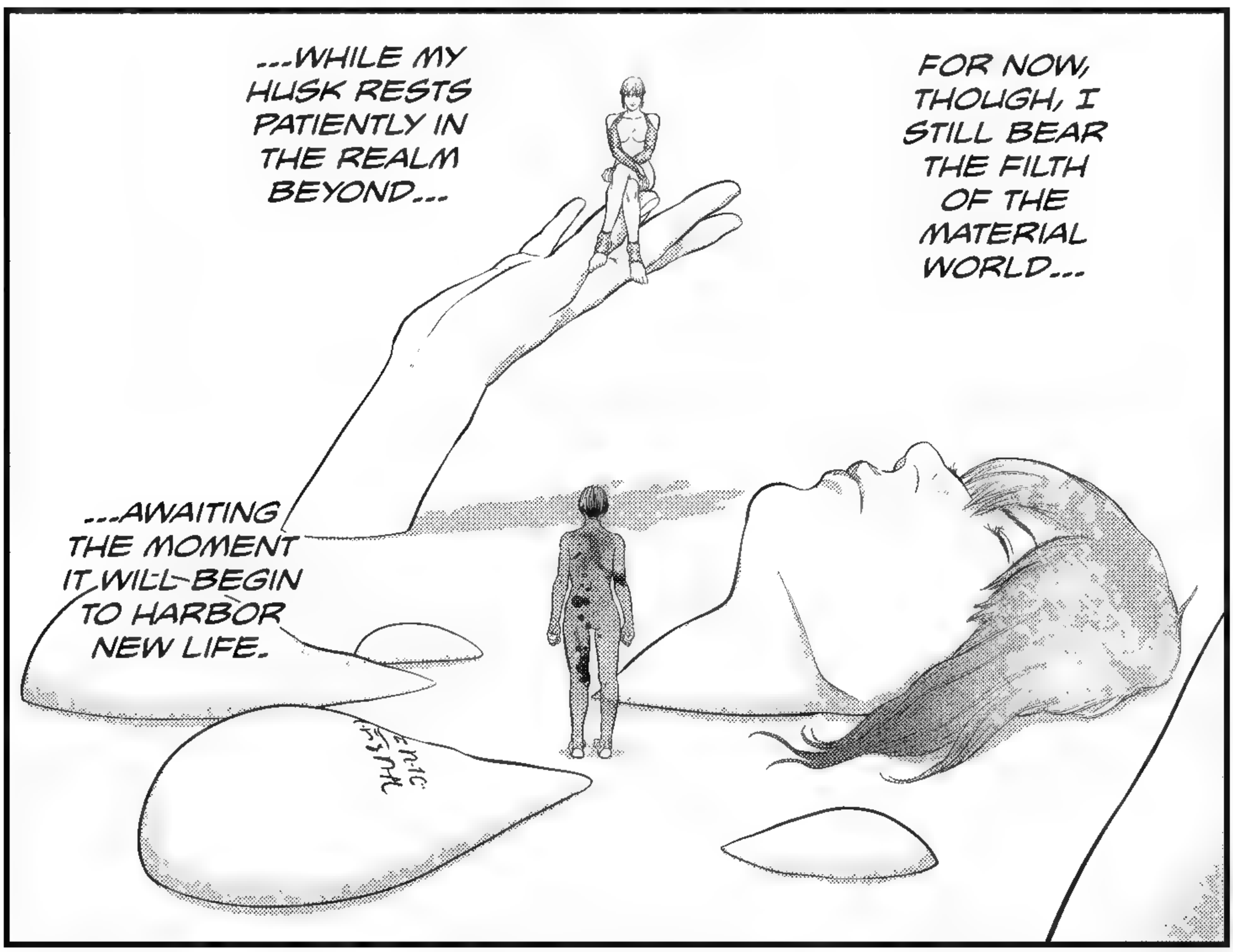
AW. HOW CUTE. LIKE THE MIND OF A CHILD.

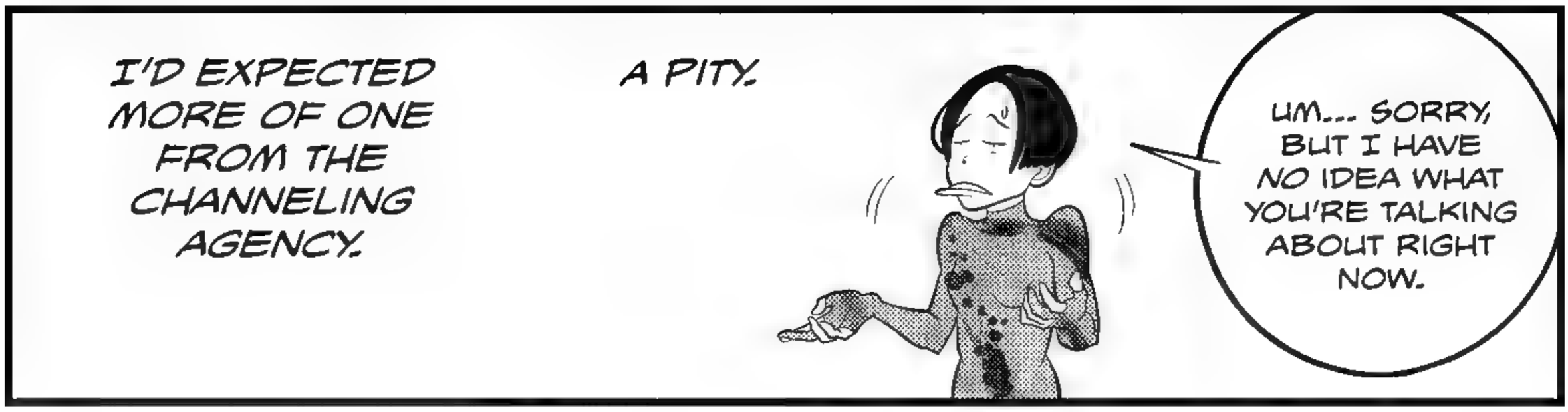
OUR... CRADLE?

COMES WITH THE TERRITORY, THANKS TO WHAT I'VE BECOME.

BUT, YES... I SUPPOSE THERE COULD COME A TIME WHEN I MIGHT BE REFERRED TO AS SUCH.







BUT I WOULD LEAVE YOU WITH A MESSAGE. A LITTLE MEMENTO OF OUR ENCOUNTER.

WELL, ENOUGH OF THAT, THEN. NO POINT WASTING TIME ON TOPICS THAT ARE BEYOND YOU.

HMPH!

WHEN BURIED CASKET IS UNEARTHED WHERE FLITS THE GHOST THE NINE RUNS AFTER...

...PONDER WHO IT IS THAT WISHED...

...TO SET IT ATOP THE BALANCED PLATTER.

ZSHH

ZSHH

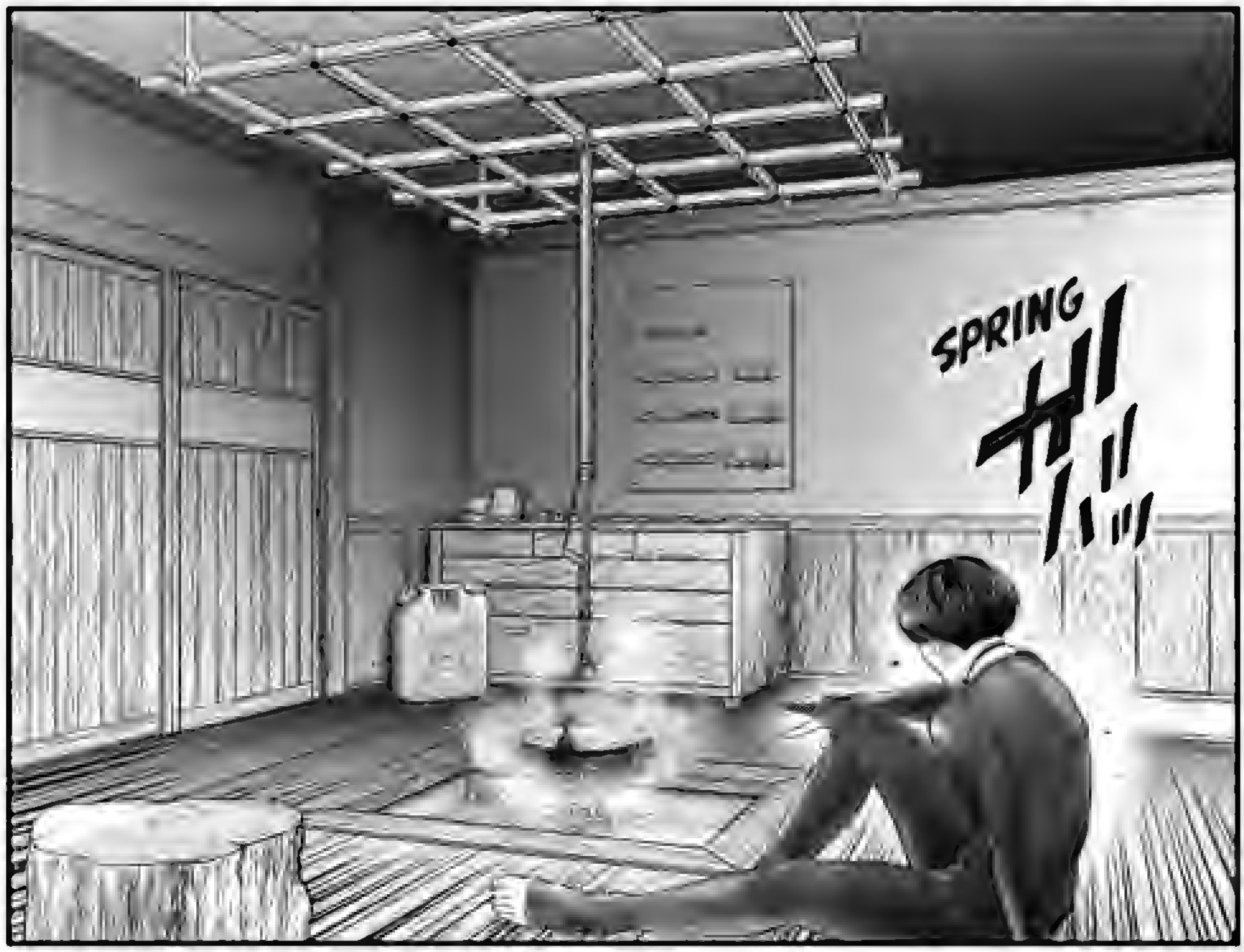
I'M SURE THE BRIGHT MINDS OF SECTION 9 CAN UNRAVEL THE REST.

WAIT! DON'T GO! I STILL DON'T GET IT!

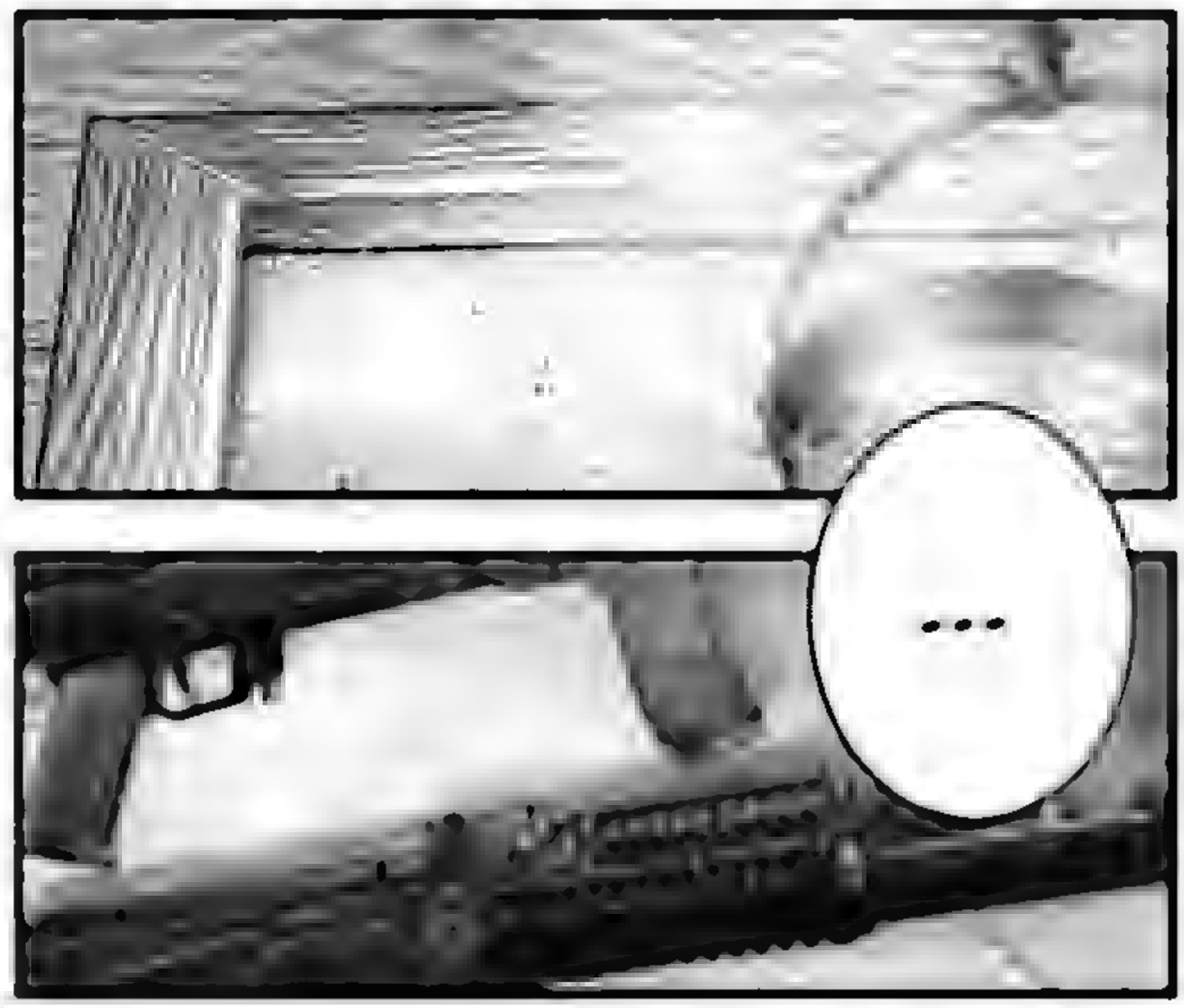
HUH?! LIKE, SECTION 9? YOUR GHOST? THE ONE WE'RE TRACKING DOWN?

FAREWELL, FOR THE DAWN DRAWS NIGH.

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO WAKE UP.


SPRING HILL

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?


...

RIGHT. I REMEMBER GETTING SHOT.

...WHICH MEANS SOMEBODY MUST HAVE BROUGHT ME HERE.

OW! MY SHOUL-DER!

THROB

?!

RATTLE

WHAT KIND OF PERSON LIVES IN A PLACE LIKE—

CREEEAK...

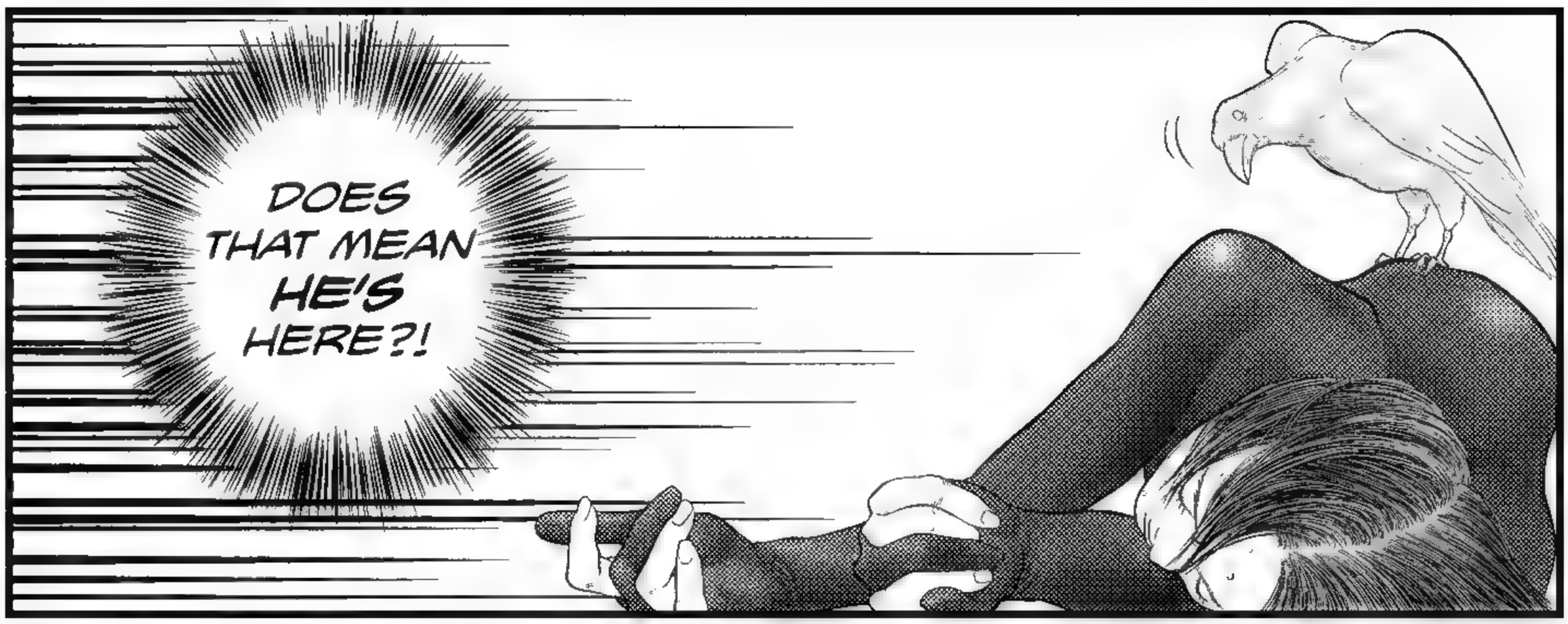
WAIT. WHY AM I PRETENDING TO BE ASLEEP? SHOULDN'T I JUST—

FLOP

W-WAS THAT THE SOUND OF SOMEONE COMING HOME?!

FLAP
WHO'S THERE...?!
OH, GOD.

B-BUMP
B-BUMP
FLAP
09
REPRESSED MEMORY
KREEEAK...
NO! PLEASE NO!
TELL ME THAT'S NOT THE SAME WHITE CROW!
PEEK


DOES THAT MEAN HE'S HERE?!

IS...
IS THIS THE HOME OF THE WHITE BEAR?!

THWK

PRETTY EFFICIENT, IF YOU ASK ME.

PROBABLY WAITED HIM OUT. A HIGH-OUTPUT PROSTHETIC DOESN'T PUT UP MUCH OF A FIGHT ONCE THE BATTERY'S DEAD.

DID HE HAVE TO *DISEM-BOWEL* THE POOR GUY?

EESH. WHAT A SIGHT.

WHAT I WANNA KNOW IS HOW YOU MAKE A SOLDIER LIKE THAT OUT OF FLESH AND BLOOD.

TELLS US HE'S GOT AS MUCH TACTICAL SENSE AS HE'S GOT STRENGTH.

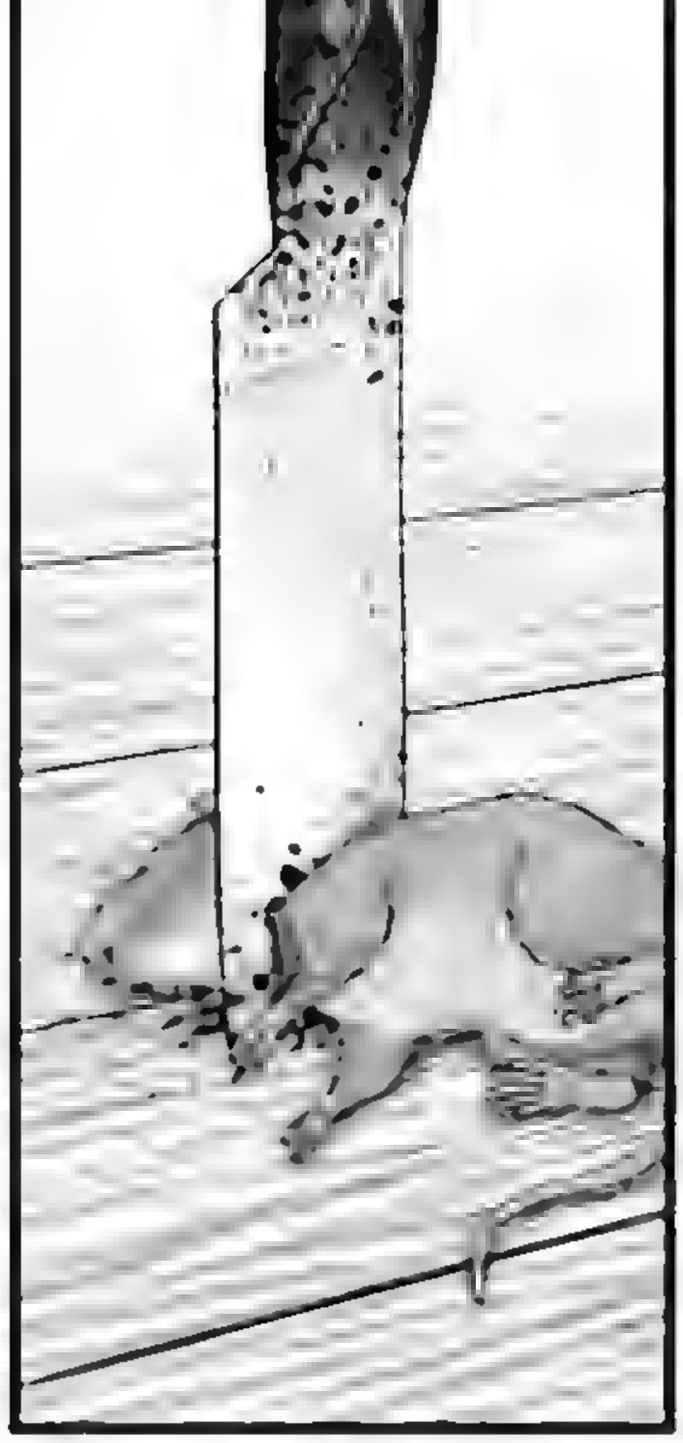
...NO.

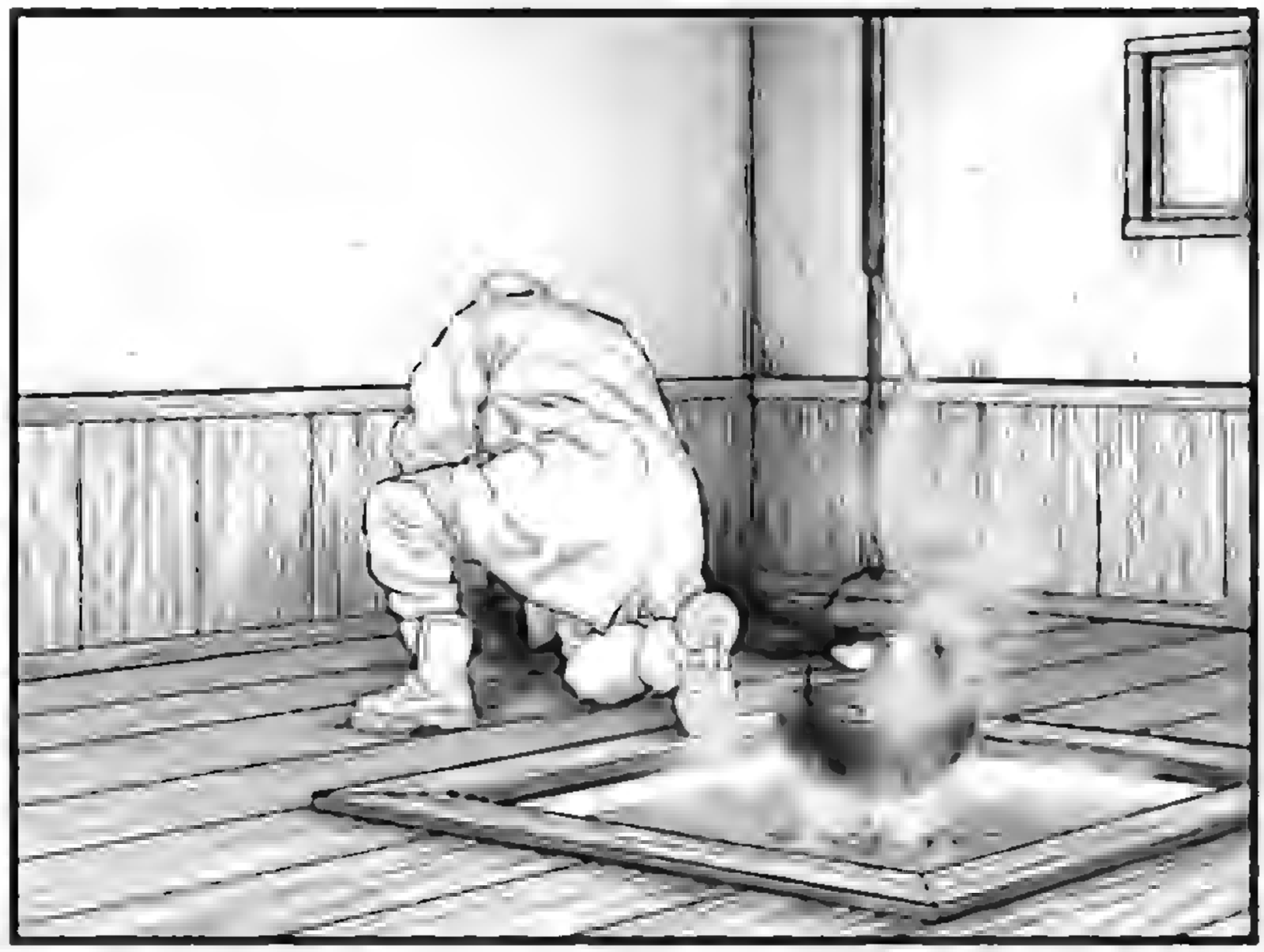
MAYBE HE DOESN'T HAVE THE SAME STOMACH FOR KILL-ING WHEN IT ISN'T A PROS-THETIC.

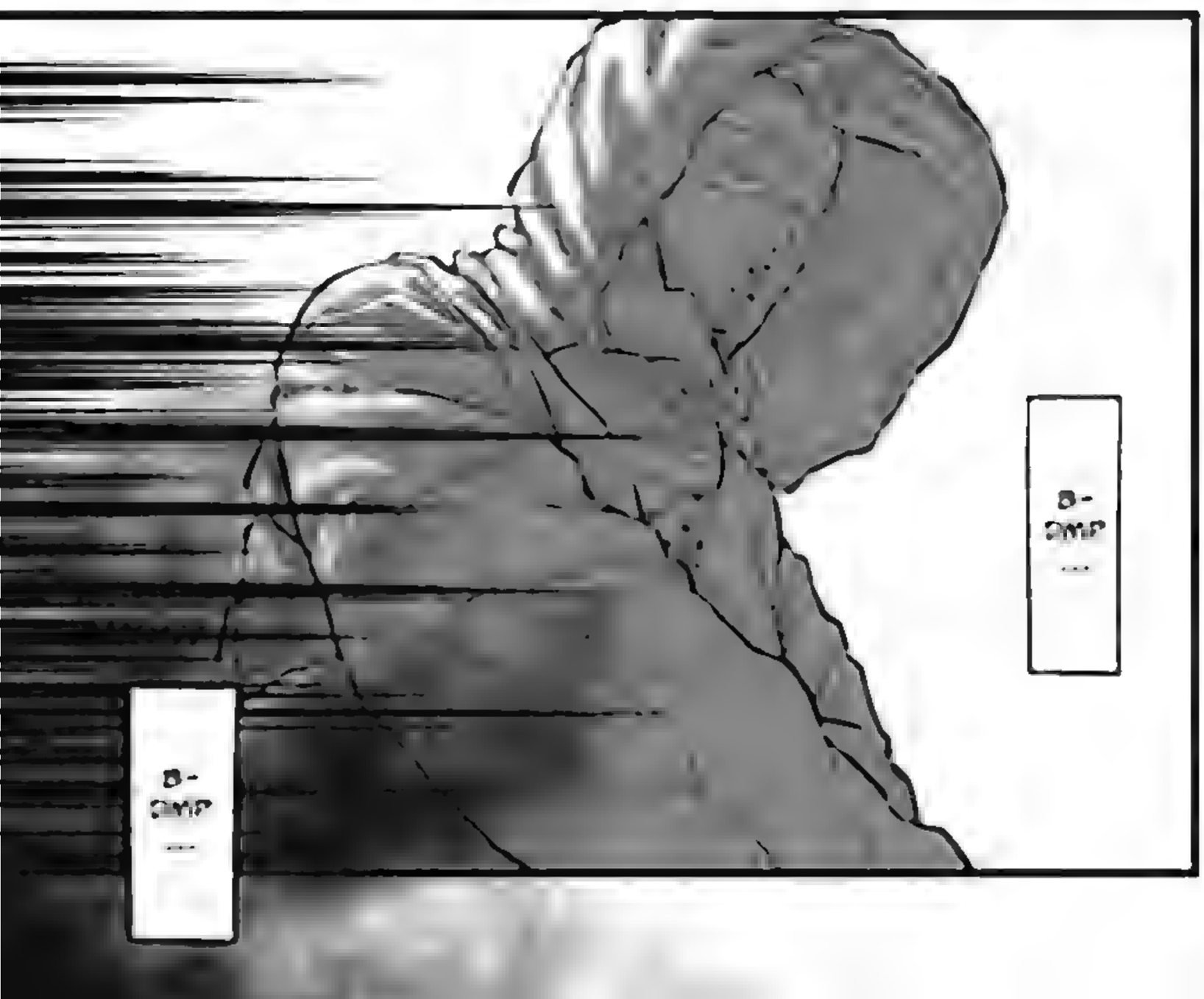
HARD TO SAY.

WAIT. SO WHAT ABOUT TSUNAGI?

THE WHITE BEAR IS JUST AS CAPABLE OF HUNTING FLESH AND BLOOD.






B-
SMP
...
B-
SMP
...

B-
SMP
...
B-
SMP
...

B-DMP...

...HUH?

EVERYTHING WENT DARK.

I... I CAN'T MOVE.

B-DMP...

IS THIS ANOTHER OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCE?

THAT'S WEIRD...

...

B-DMP...

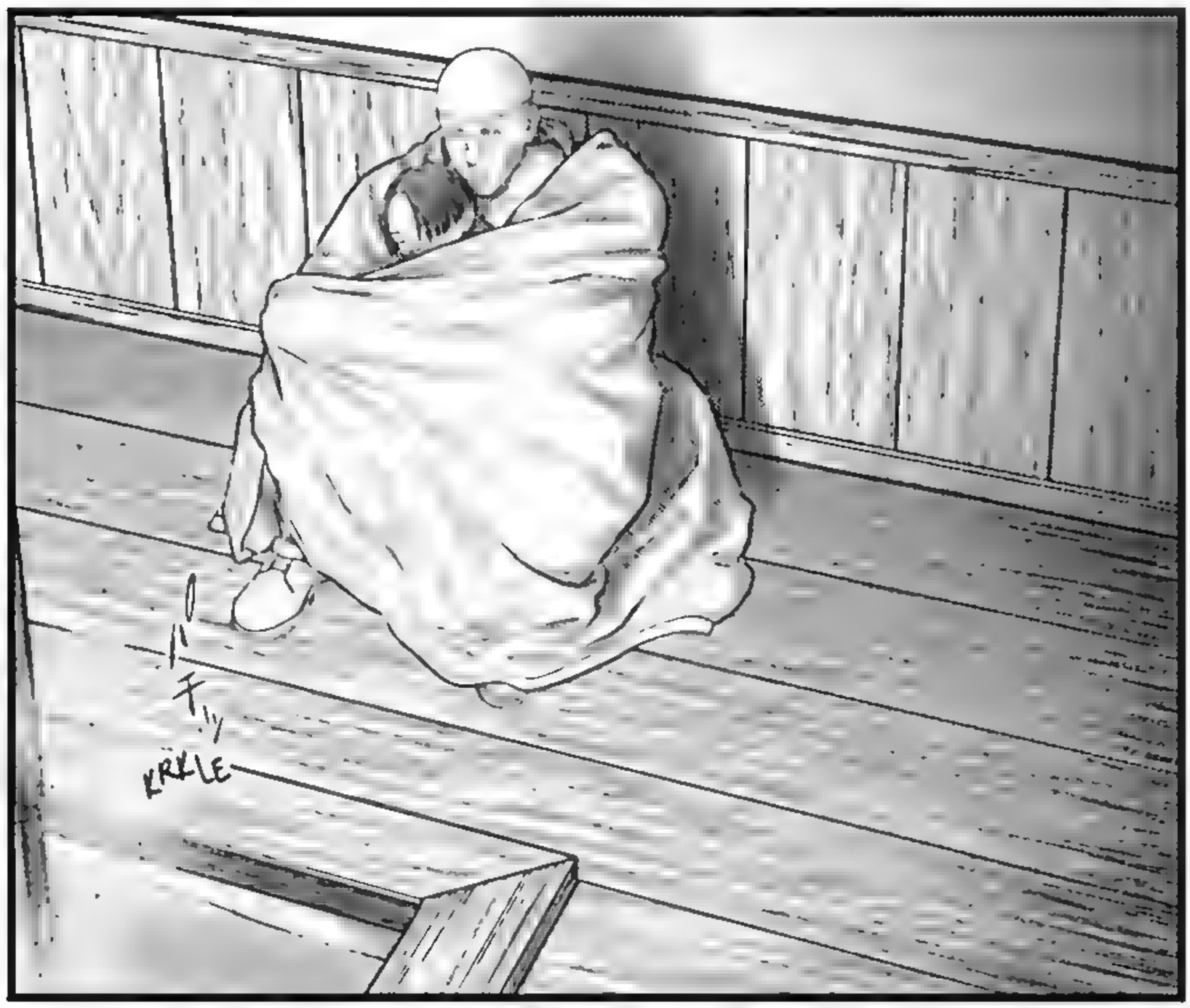
MY BACK...

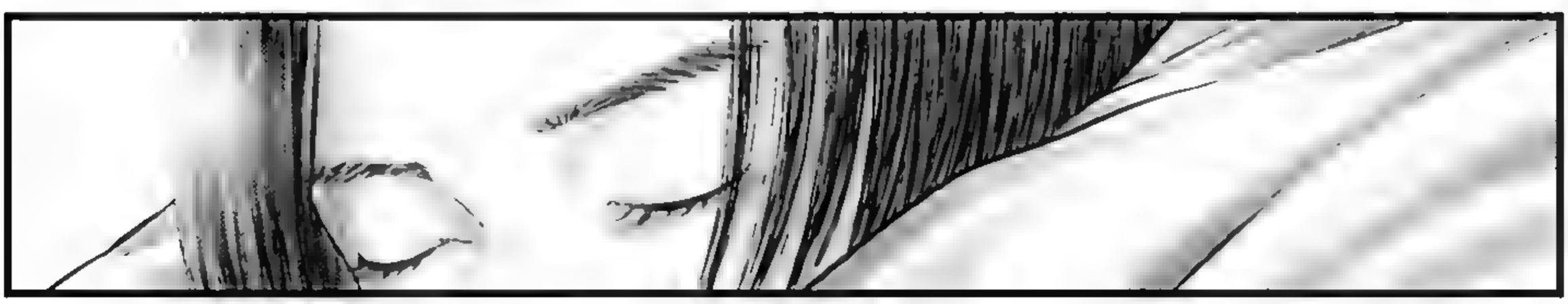
B-DMP...

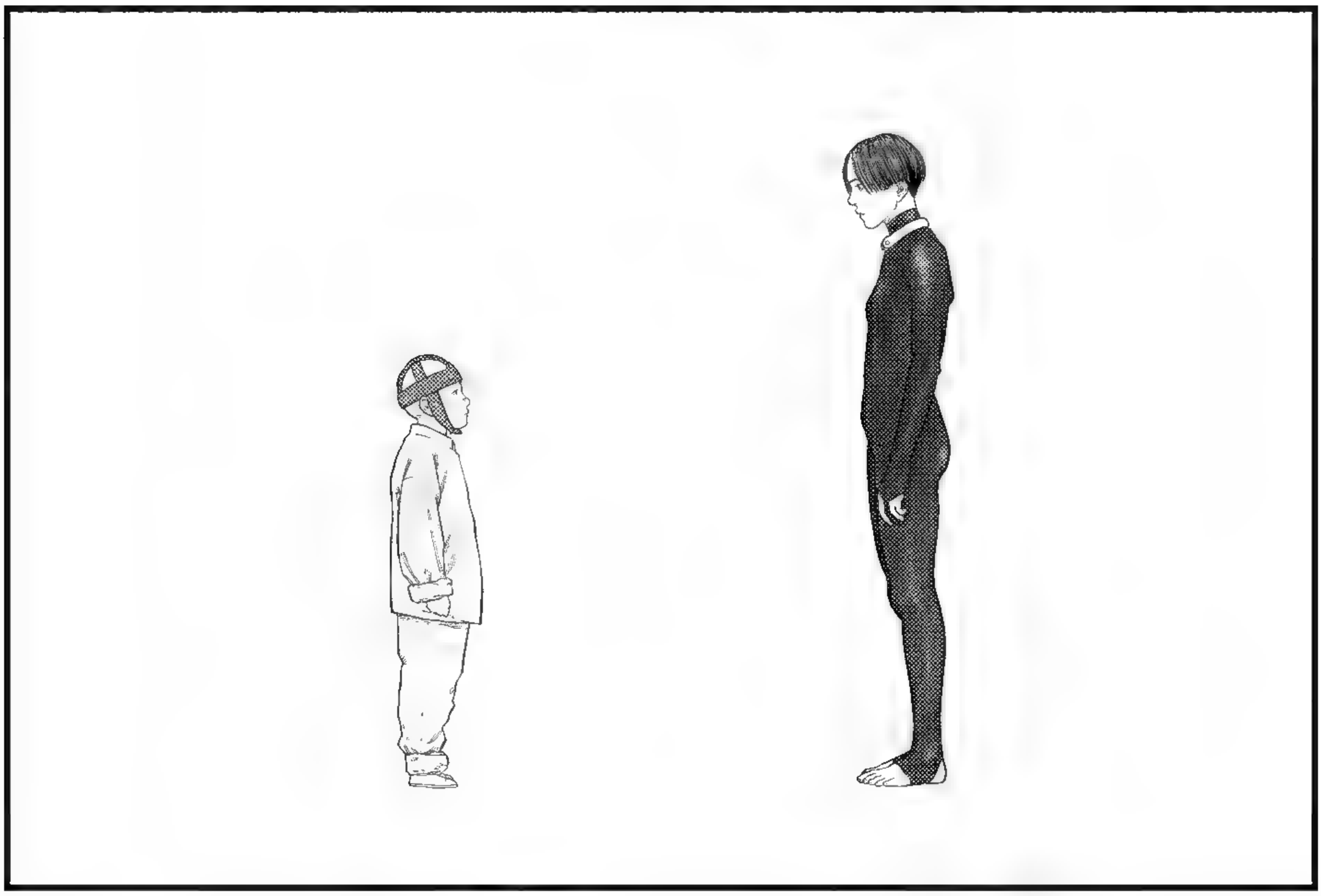
IT FEELS SO WARM.

B- DMP ...

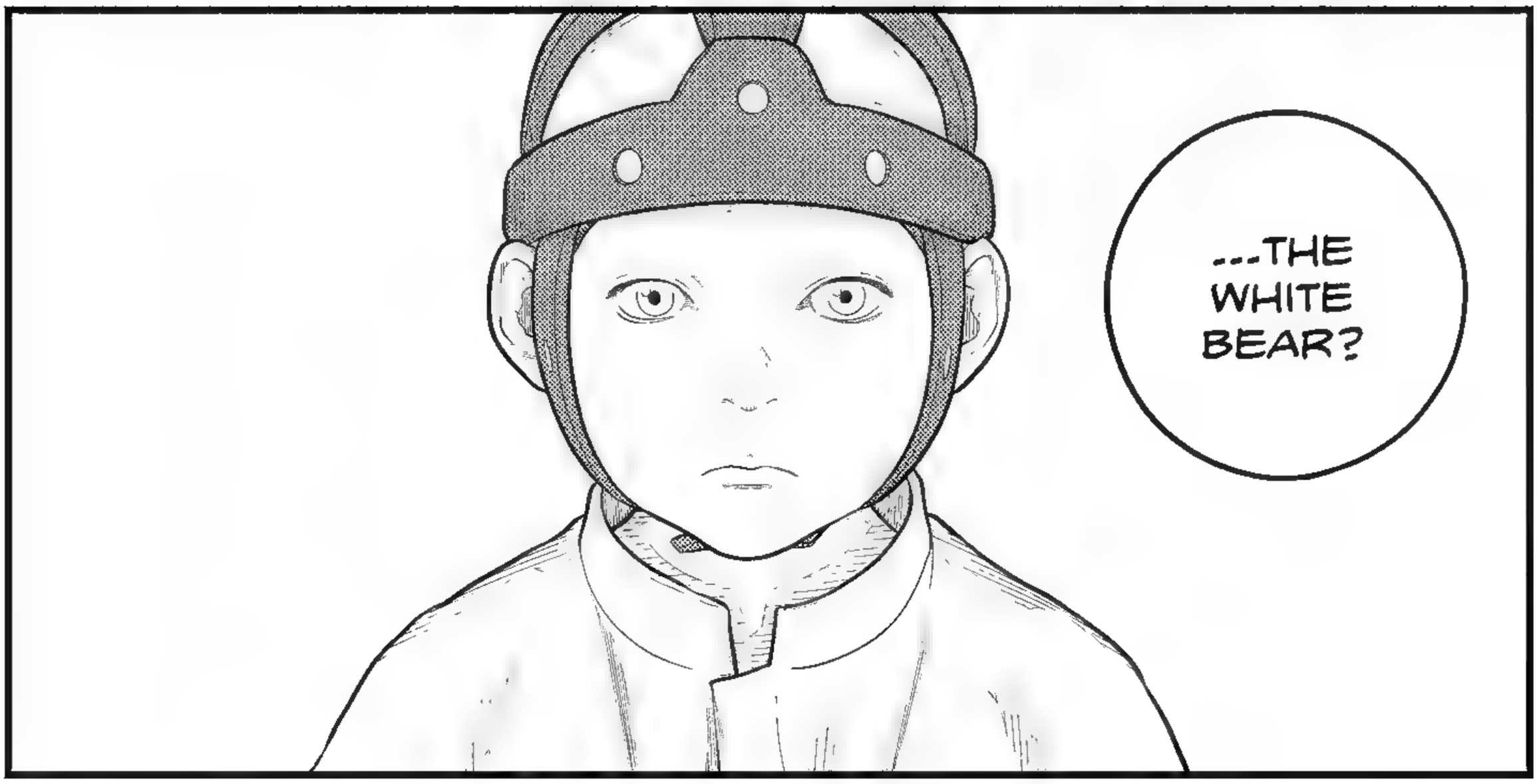
B- DMP ...







ARE... ARE YOU...


...THE WHITE BEAR?

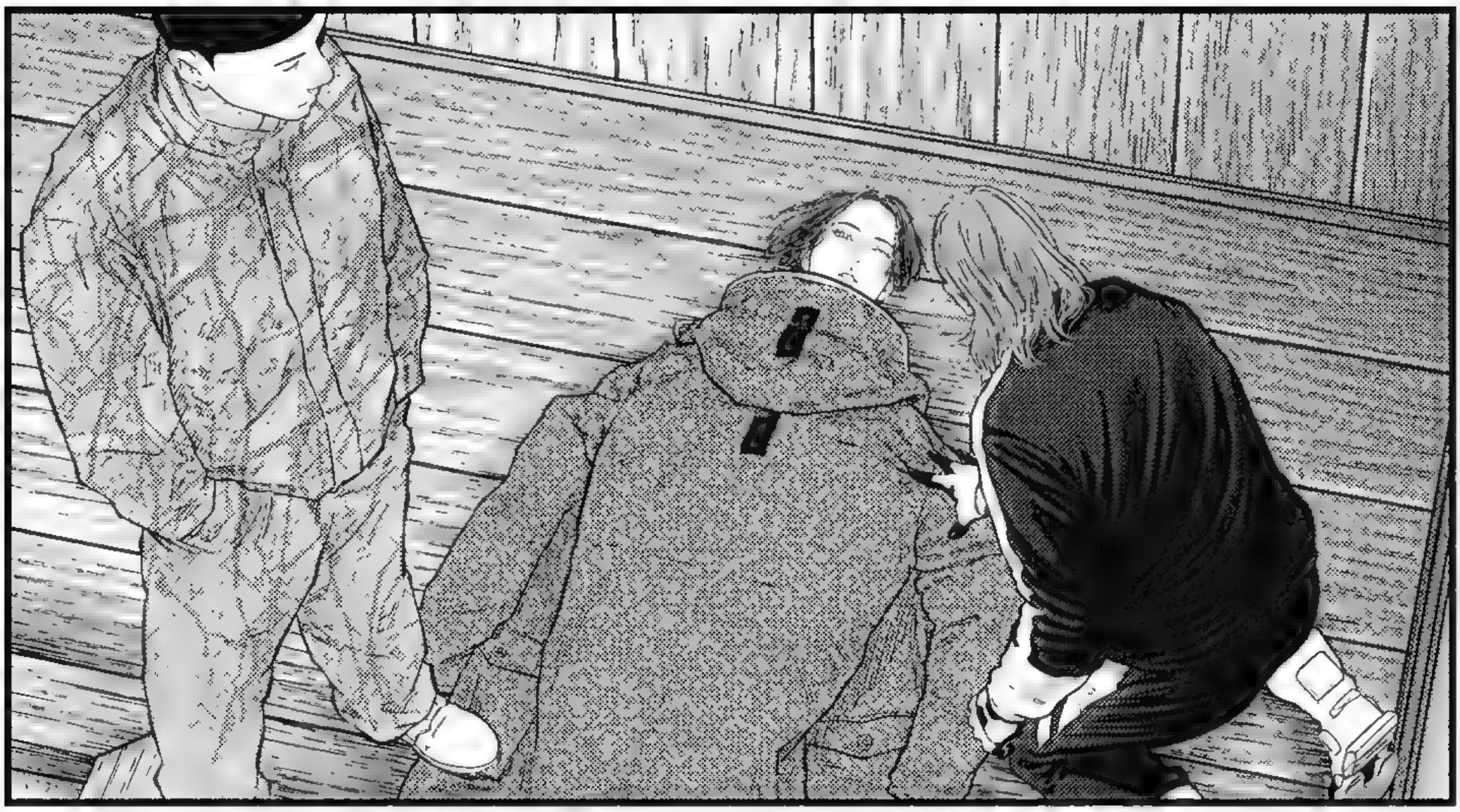
?!
KREEEEEEEEE
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
IS THIS SOME KIND OF LAB? ARE THERE *BABIES* INSIDE THOSE TANKS?!
BLUP...
LABOR
WHY?!

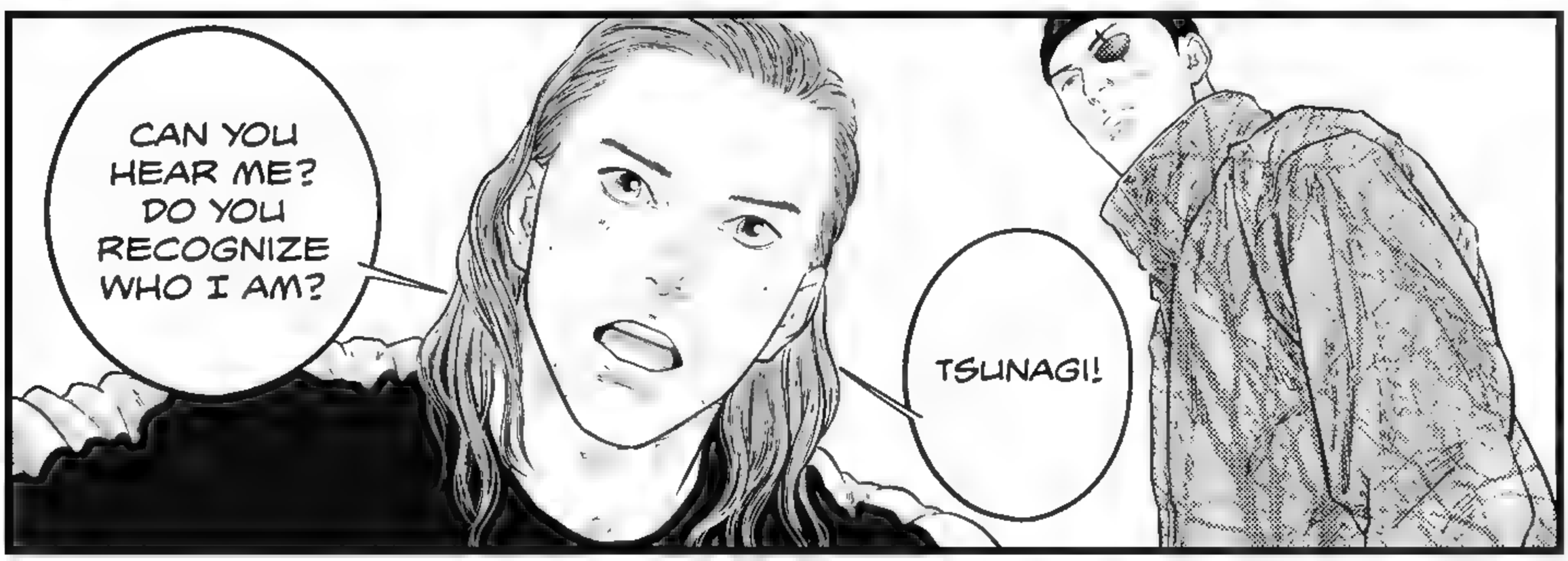
ARE THESE...
...SCENES FROM HIS PAST?

YOU SNOW-WHITE DEVIL!! Белоснежный дьявол!!
THE HELL?! ОЙ!?
KRMMM
BAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
WHAT NOW...?
IS THIS THE SAKHALIN LINE? DURING THE WAR?

HEY! I KNOW THOSE SIDE-BURNS!
THAT'S THE GUY FROM THE DUMP SITE! THE STEP-FATHER!
?!
WHAT IS THIS I'M FEELING? THIS EMOTION, IT'S—

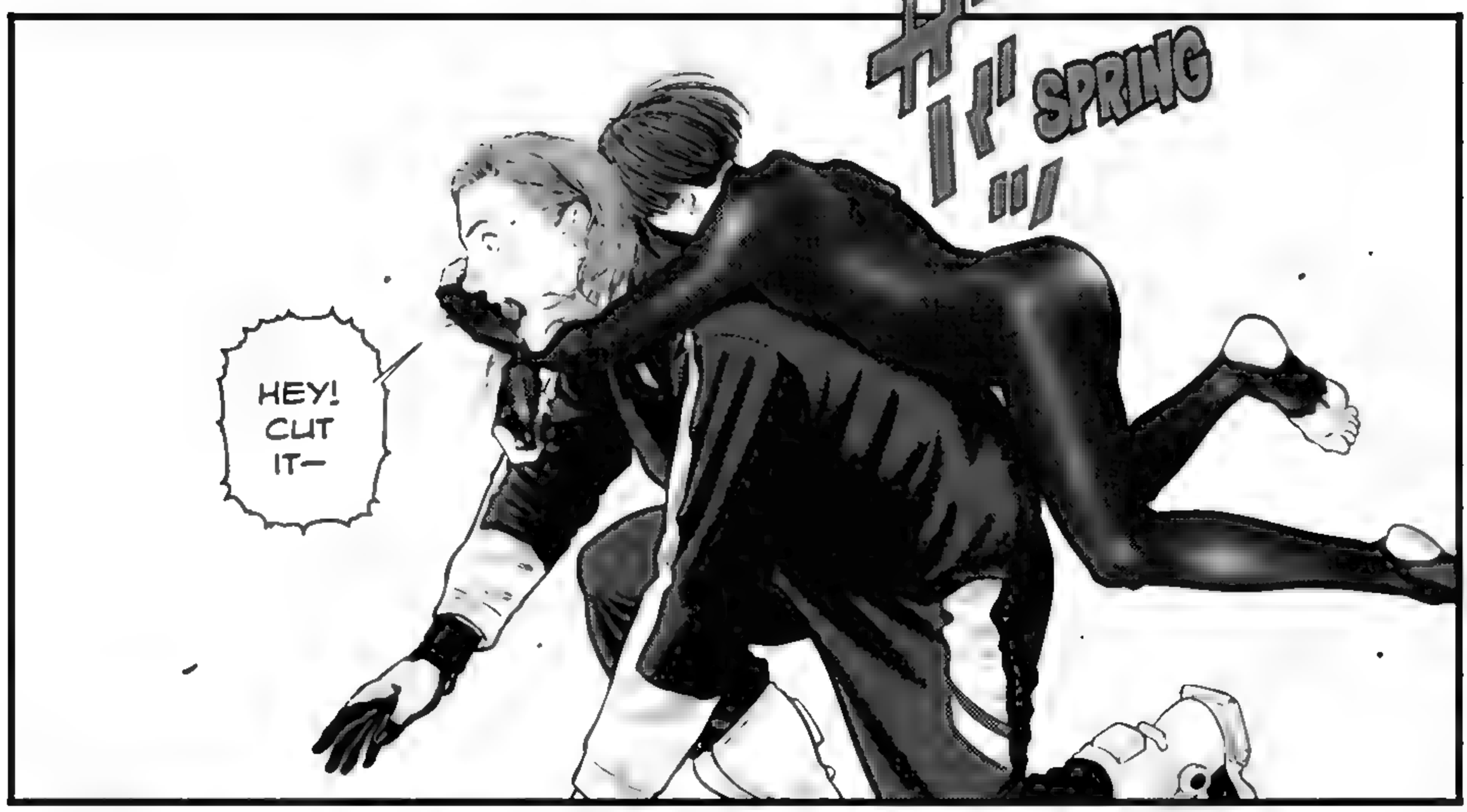
HEY!
HEY!
TSUNAGI! SNAP OUT OF IT!




CAN YOU HEAR ME? DO YOU RECOGNIZE WHO I AM?
TSUNAGI!

SHE BACK WITH US?
GRAB HOLD.
THAT'LL DO.
WE'RE GETTING OFF THIS MOUNTAIN.

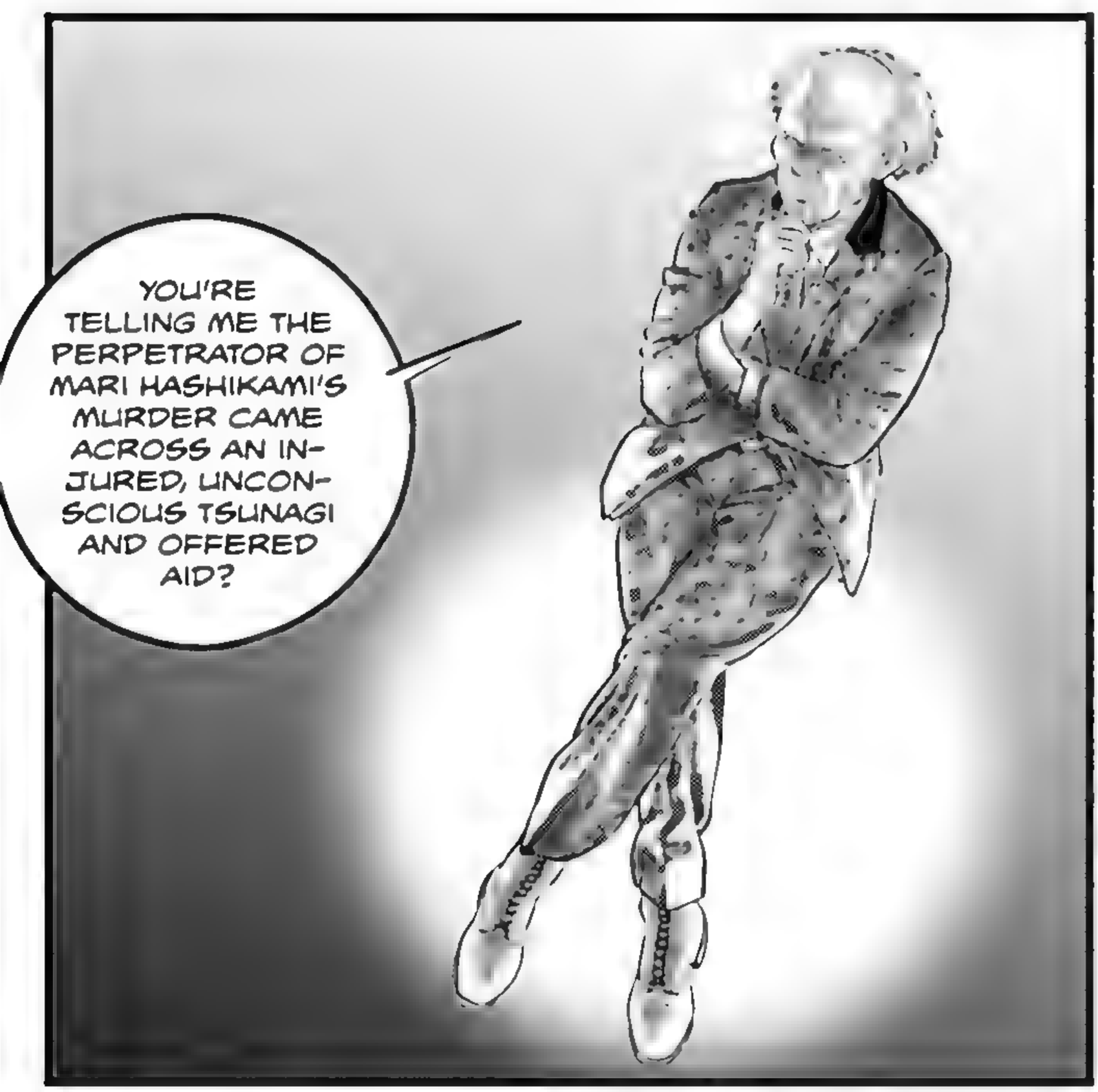
T... TOGUSA ...

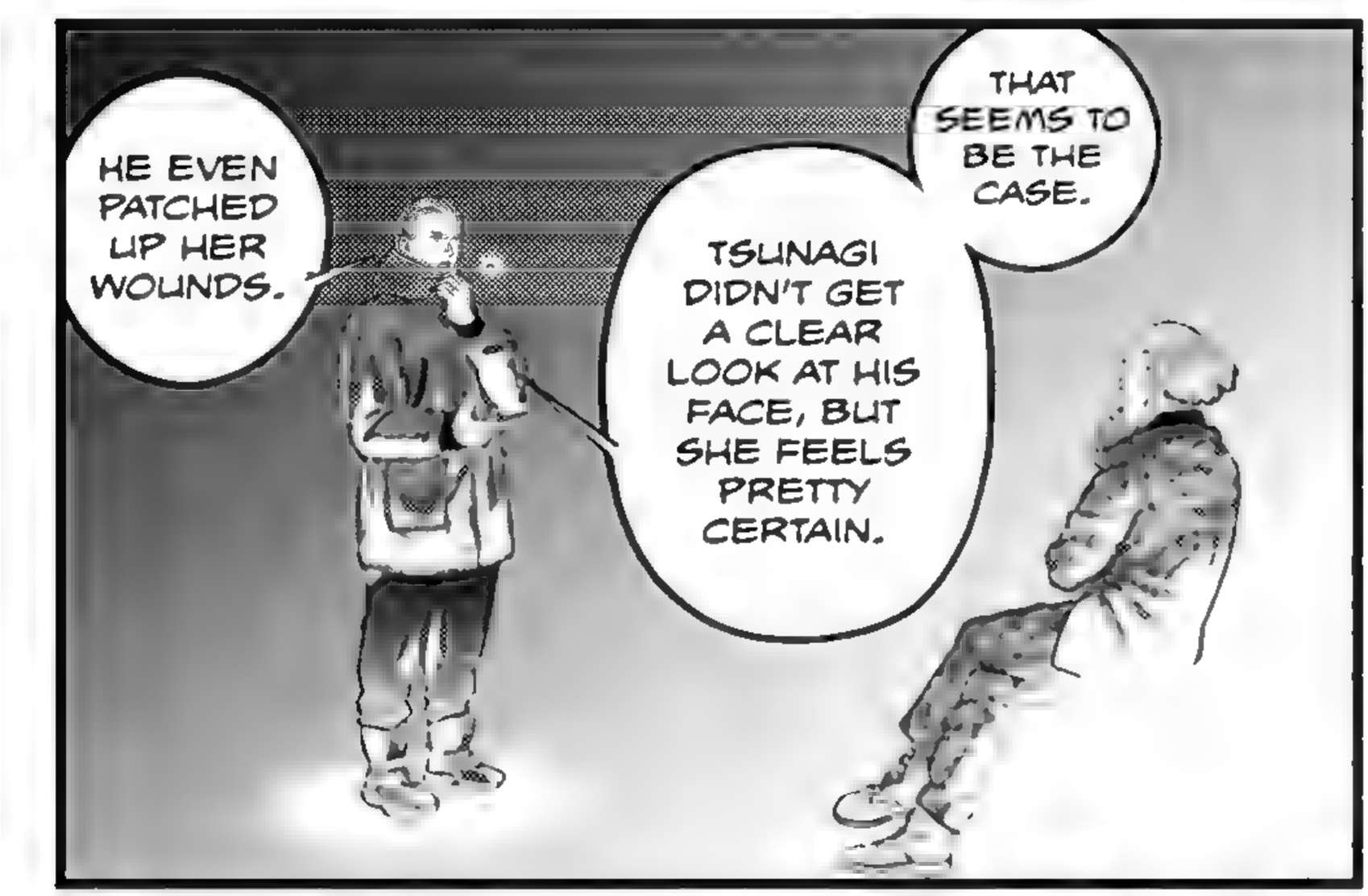

SPRING
HEY! CUT IT—

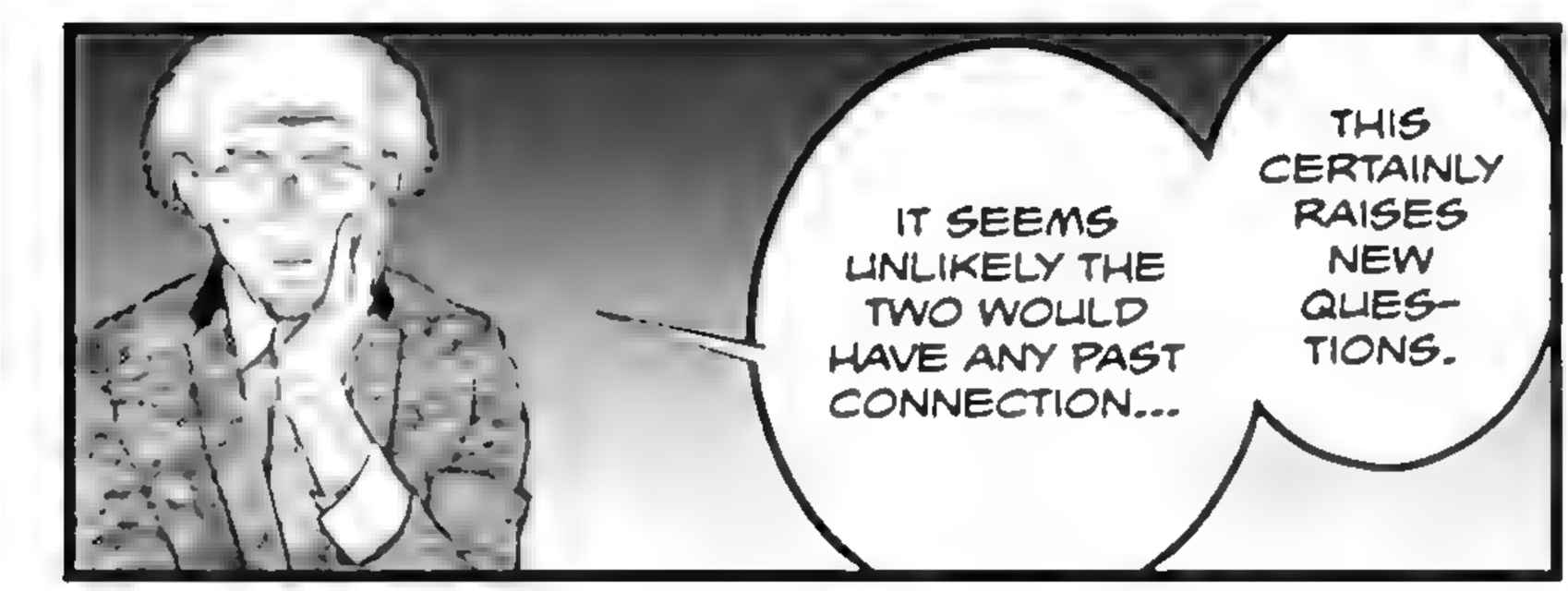
I... I WAS SO SCARED...

IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.

IT WAS TERRI-FYING...
YEAH. I GET IT.
OH, TOGUSA! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!


YOU'RE TELLING ME THE PERPETRATOR OF MARI HASHIKAMI'S MURDER CAME ACROSS AN IN-JURED, UNCON-SCIOUS TSUNAGI AND OFFERED AID?


HE EVEN PATCHED UP HER WOUNDS.
TSUNAGI DIDN'T GET A CLEAR LOOK AT HIS FACE, BUT SHE FEELS PRETTY CERTAIN.
THAT SEEMS TO BE THE CASE.


IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THE TWO WOULD HAVE ANY PAST CONNECTION...
THIS CERTAINLY RAISES NEW QUES-TIONS.

...YES, SIR. ...RIGHT. UNDER-STOOD.

WE'RE BACK AT THE STORAGE SITE WHERE WE ENCOUNTERED THE MAJOR'S PROSTHETIC. WE'LL LAY LOW HERE FOR A WHILE, JUST TO BE SURE—

HEY. TOGUSA.

?!

HEARD WE LOST OUR BEST LEAD ON *YOUR* WATCH. SOMETHIN' ABOUT HER GETTING IMPALED RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES.

IF YOU'RE NOT UP TO THIS, MAYBE YOU OUGHTA HAND IT OFF TO SOMEONE MORE *EXPERIENCED*. DON'T WORRY. I'LL STILL LET YOU RIDE SHOTGUN.

CAREFUL. IF YOU GO ON EQUATING SENIORITY WITH ABILITY, PEOPLE MIGHT START THINKING YOU'RE BEHIND THE TIMES.
...FOR YOUR ELDERS.
HMPH. YOU NEVER DID HAVE ANY RESPECT...

HOW 'BOUT WE CUT THE CHATTER AND GET DOWN TO BUSINESS?
I DON'T WANNA RISK MY COVER ANY LONGER THAN I HAVE TO.
VMMM...

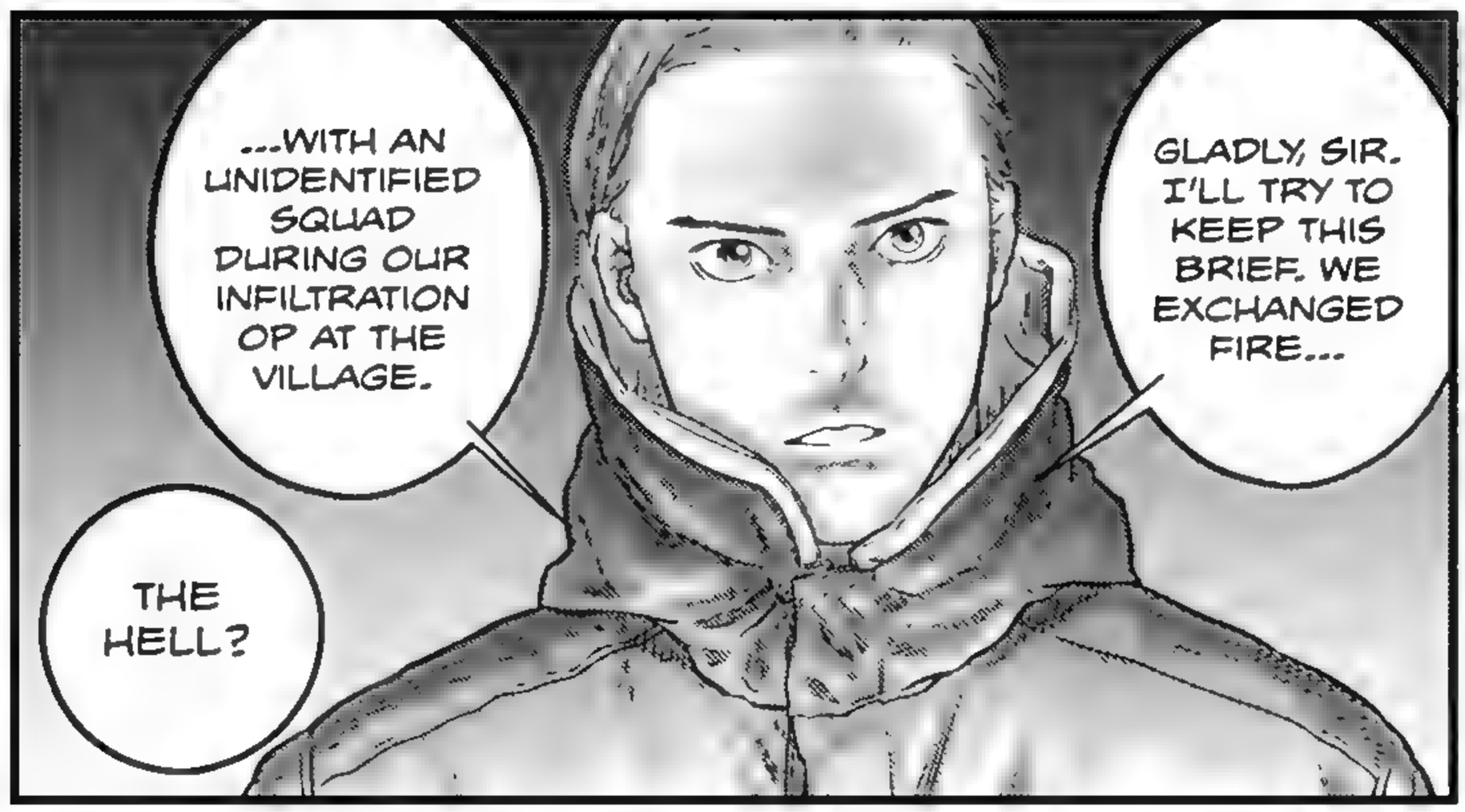
SAME.
VMMM...
BUSY RUNNIN' SECURITY DETAIL OVER HERE.
I'LL BE LISTENIN' BUT NOT TALKIN' MUCH.

GOOD. LOOKS LIKE WE'RE ALL HERE.

WHMP

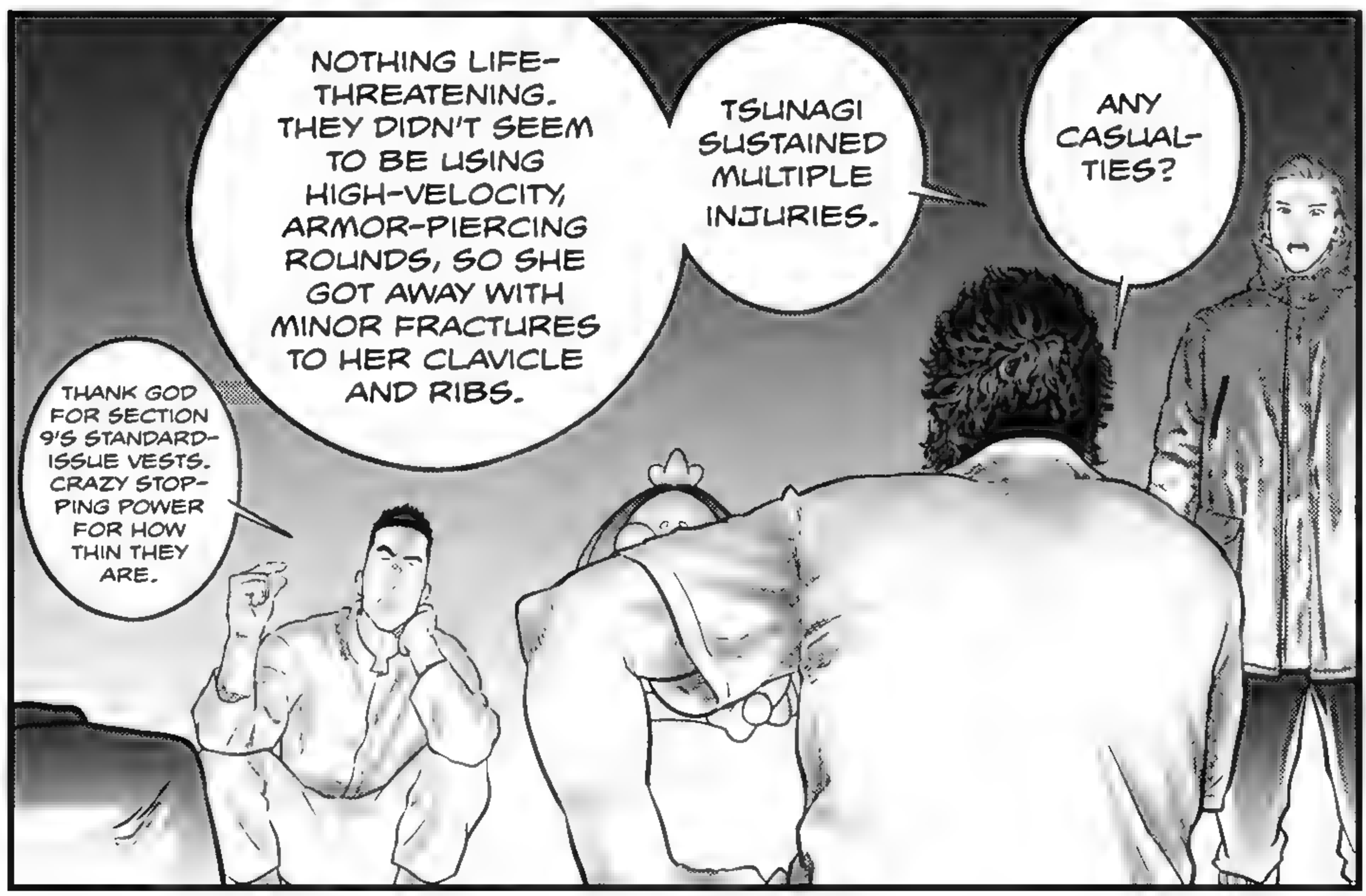
SOME KINDA NEW DEVELOPMENT?

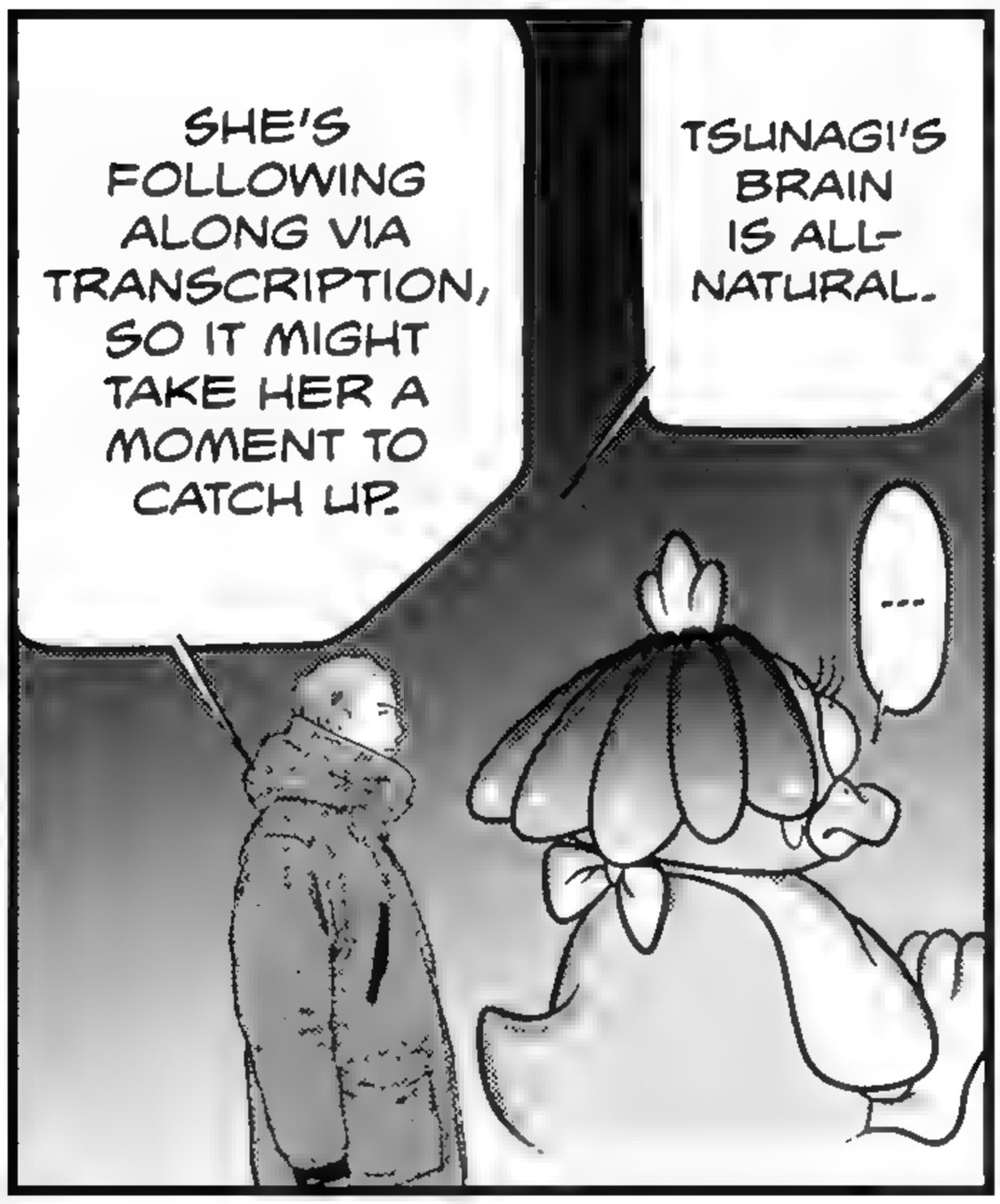
SO WHY THE MEETING, CHIEF?


...WITH AN UNIDENTIFIED SQUAD DURING OUR INFILTRATION OP AT THE VILLAGE.
GLADLY, SIR. I'LL TRY TO KEEP THIS BRIEF. WE EXCHANGED FIRE...
THE HELL?

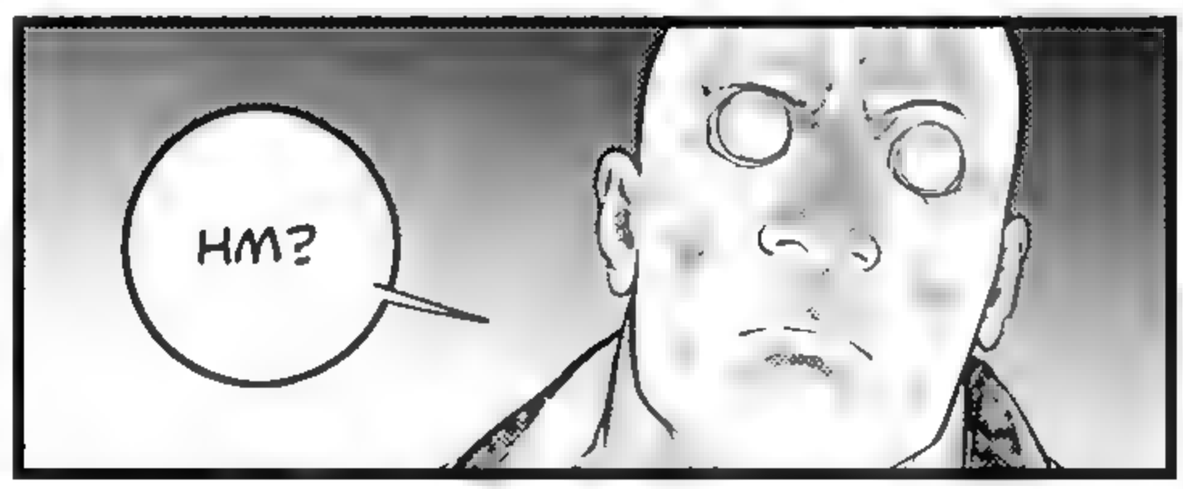
TOGU-SA?

ONE OF 'EM NEARLY HAD ME.
THE KINDA GUYS THAT DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SEE THEIR MISSION THROUGH.
A SPECIAL FORCES SQUAD, OUTFITTED WITH HIGH-OUTPUT PROSTHETICS— PROFESSIONAL KILLERS.

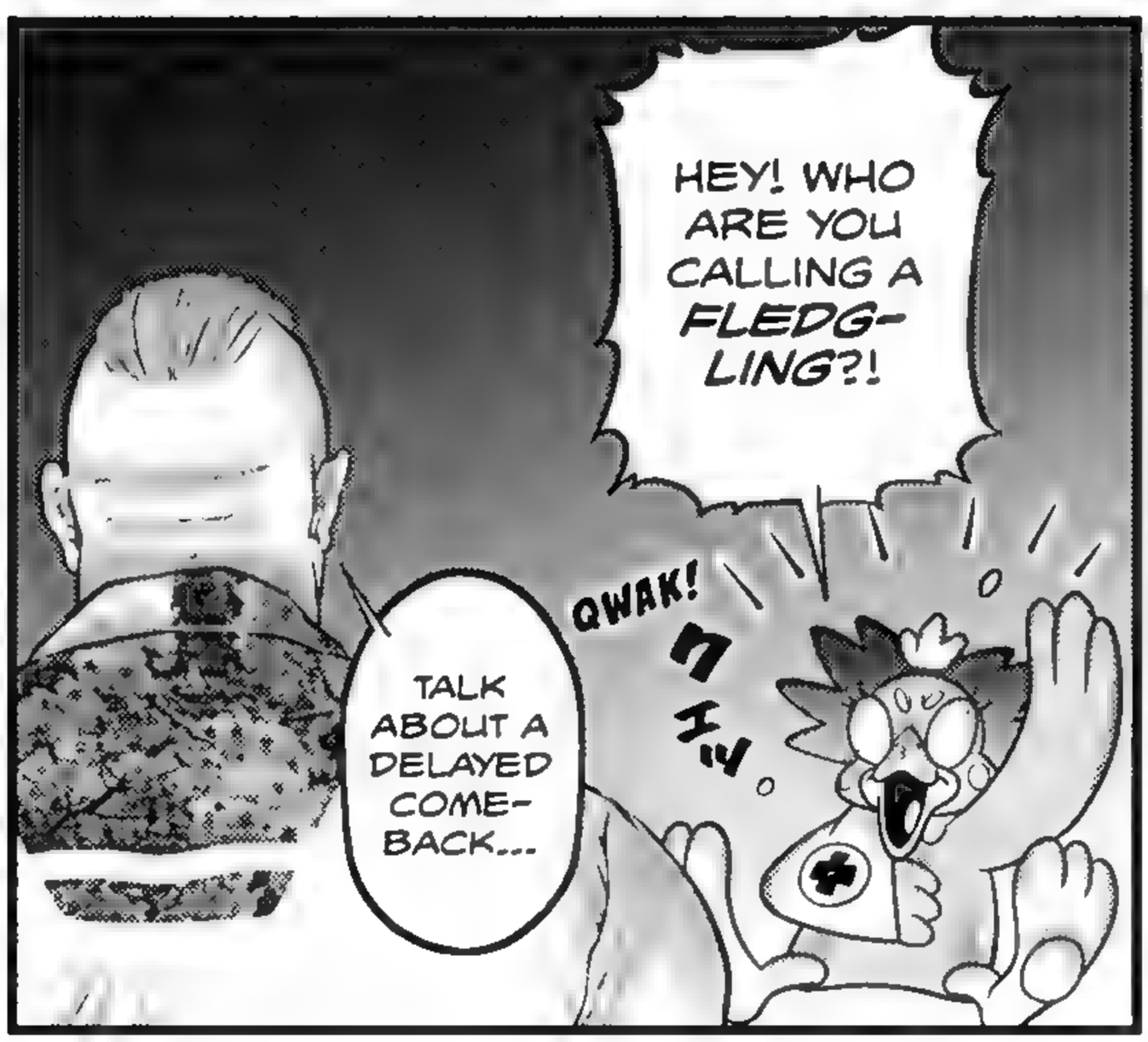

NOTHING LIFE-THREATENING. THEY DIDN'T SEEM TO BE USING HIGH-VELOCITY, ARMOR-PIERCING ROUNDS, SO SHE GOT AWAY WITH MINOR FRACTURES TO HER CLAVICLE AND RIBS.
TSUNAGI SUSTAINED MULTIPLE INJURIES.
ANY CASUAL-TIES?
THANK GOD FOR SECTION 9'S STANDARD-ISSUE VESTS. CRAZY STOP-PING POWER FOR HOW THIN THEY ARE.

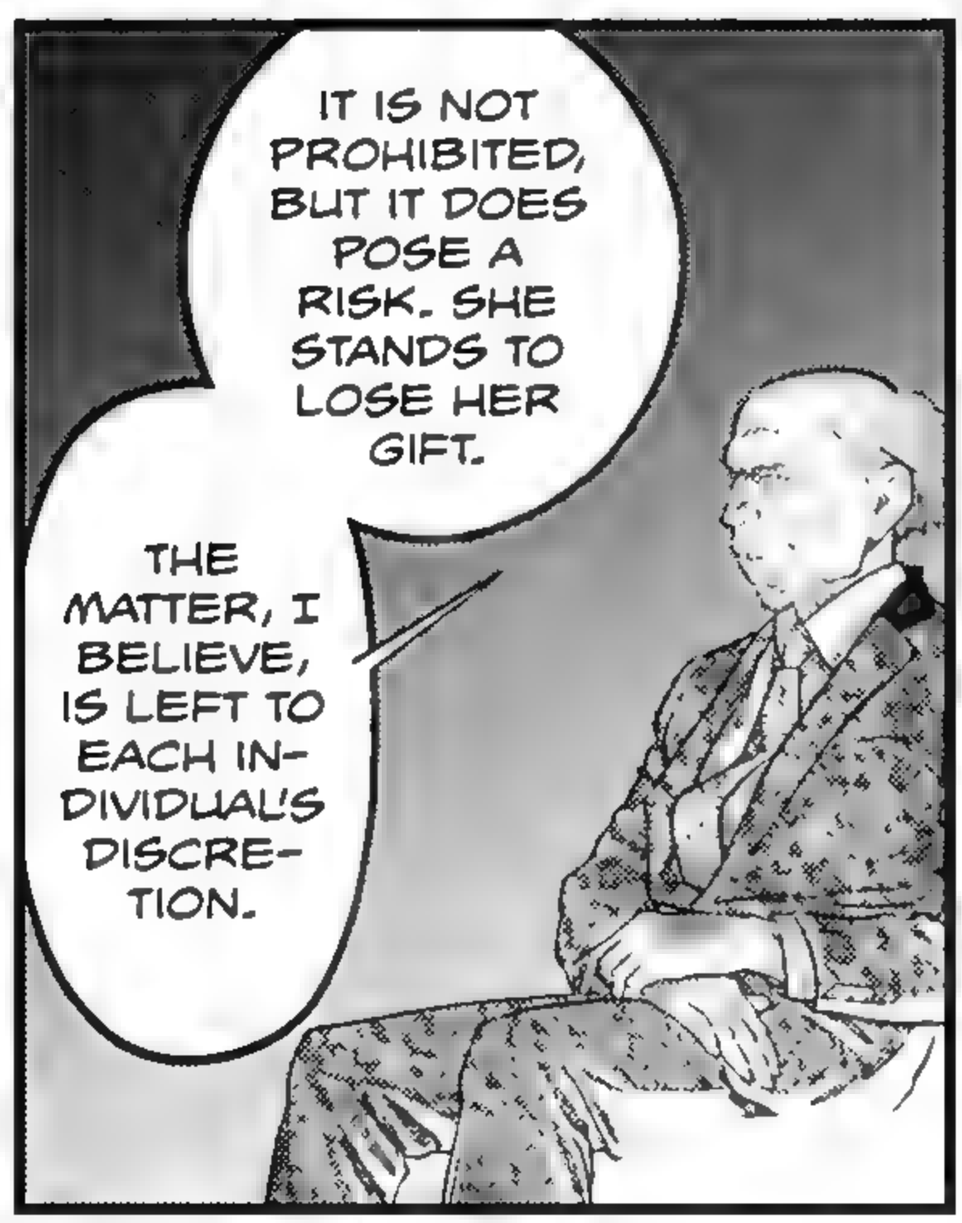

SHE'S FOLLOWING ALONG VIA TRANSCRIPTION, SO IT MIGHT TAKE HER A MOMENT TO CATCH UP.
TSUNAGI'S BRAIN IS ALL-NATURAL.
...

...
LOOKS LIKE OUR LITTLE FLEDGLING GOT A TASTE OF THE REAL WORLD.


HM?

GEEZ. THE CHANNELING AGENCY FORBID CYBERIZATION OR SOMETHIN'?
TSK!


HEY! WHO ARE YOU CALLING A *FLEDG-LING*?!
QWAK!
TALK ABOUT A DELAYED COME-BACK...


IT IS NOT PROHIBITED, BUT IT DOES POSE A RISK. SHE STANDS TO LOSE HER GIFT.
THE MATTER, I BELIEVE, IS LEFT TO EACH IN-DIVIDUAL'S DISCRE-TION.

AND ANYWAY, *I'M* THE KEY WITNESS HERE!

LAY OFF! I WANNA BE IN ON THE ACTION, TOO!

TRY LURKING MORE.

HEY. TSU-NAGI.

WHAT DOES SHE MEAN BY THAT?

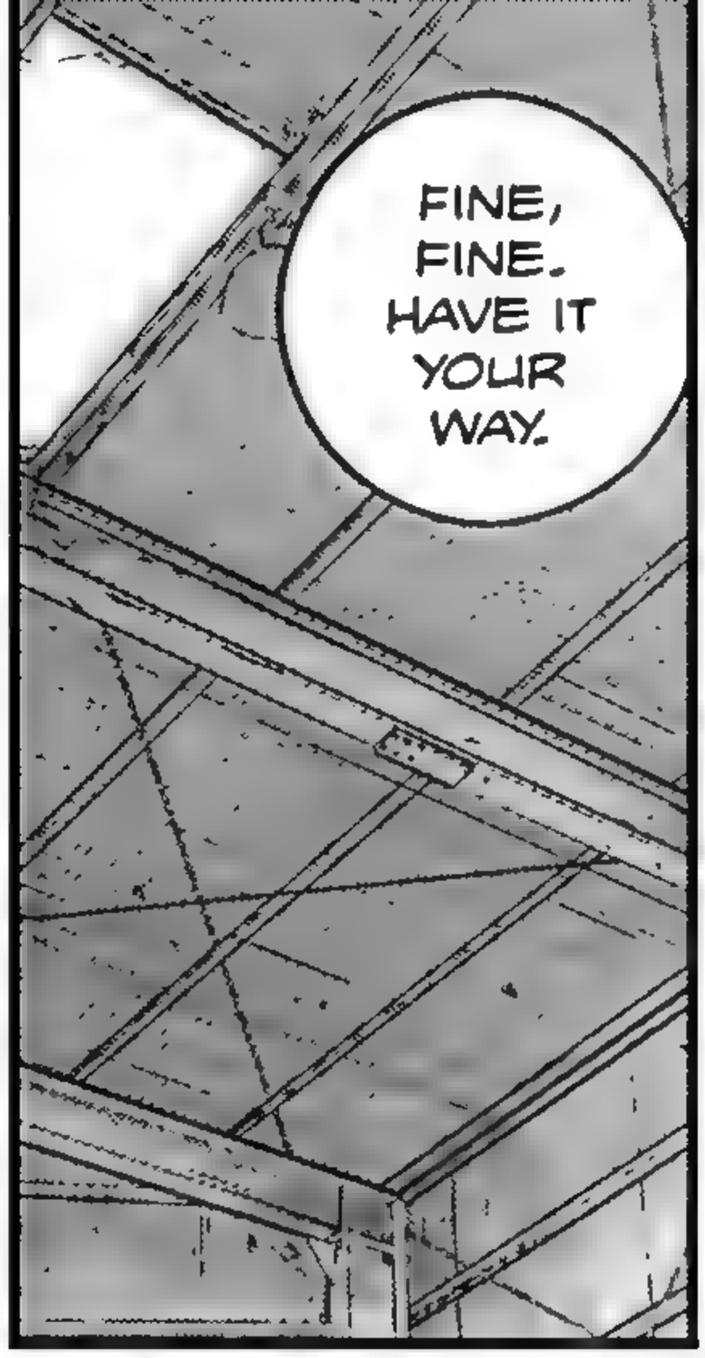
THE MAJOR SHOWED UP *AGAIN*? WHAT'S THE STORY?

UGH. ENOUGH WITH THIS LAG.

...

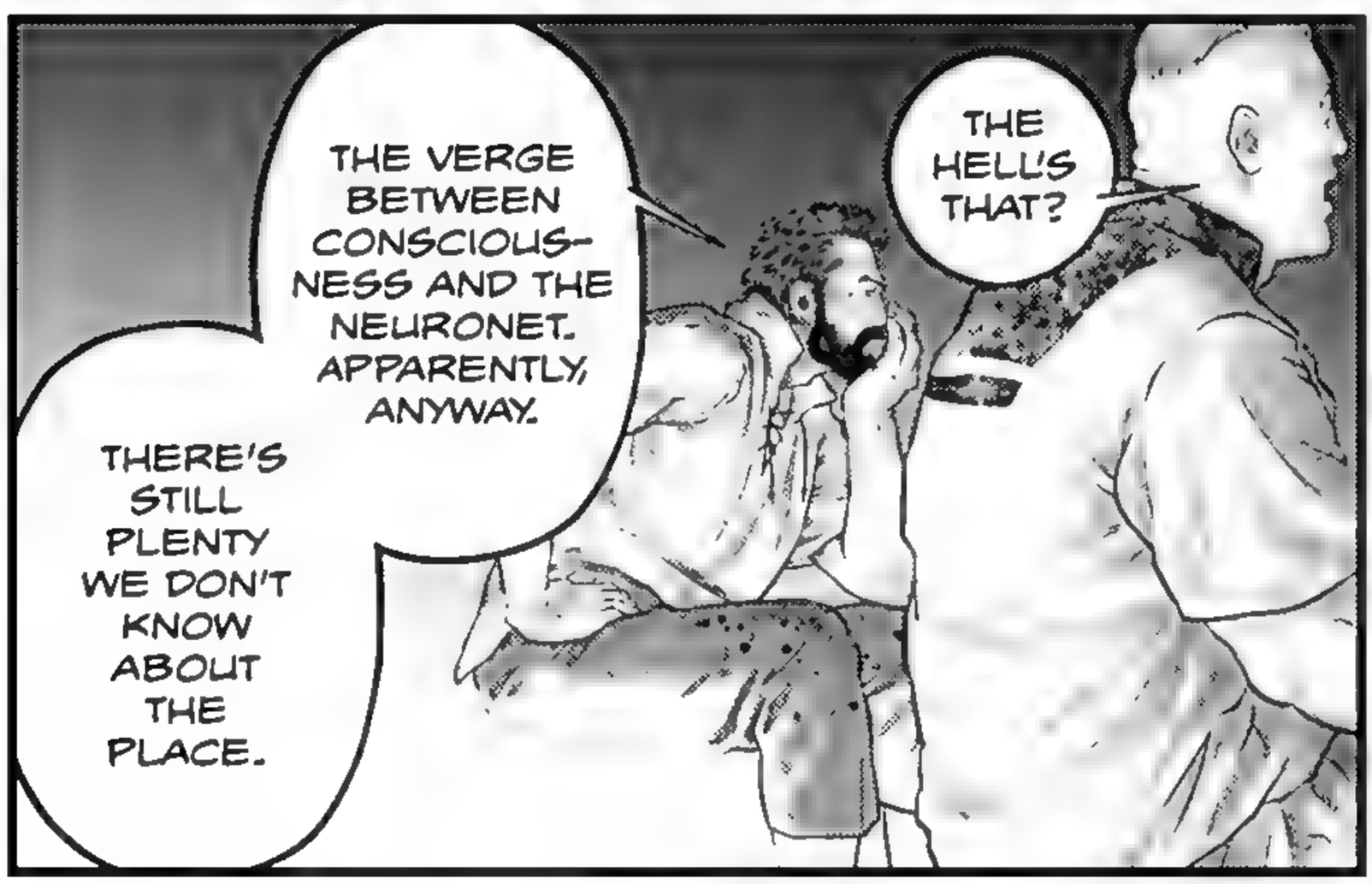
...

IT SEEMS TSUNAGI HAD A RUN-IN WITH THE MAJOR.


FINE, FINE. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.

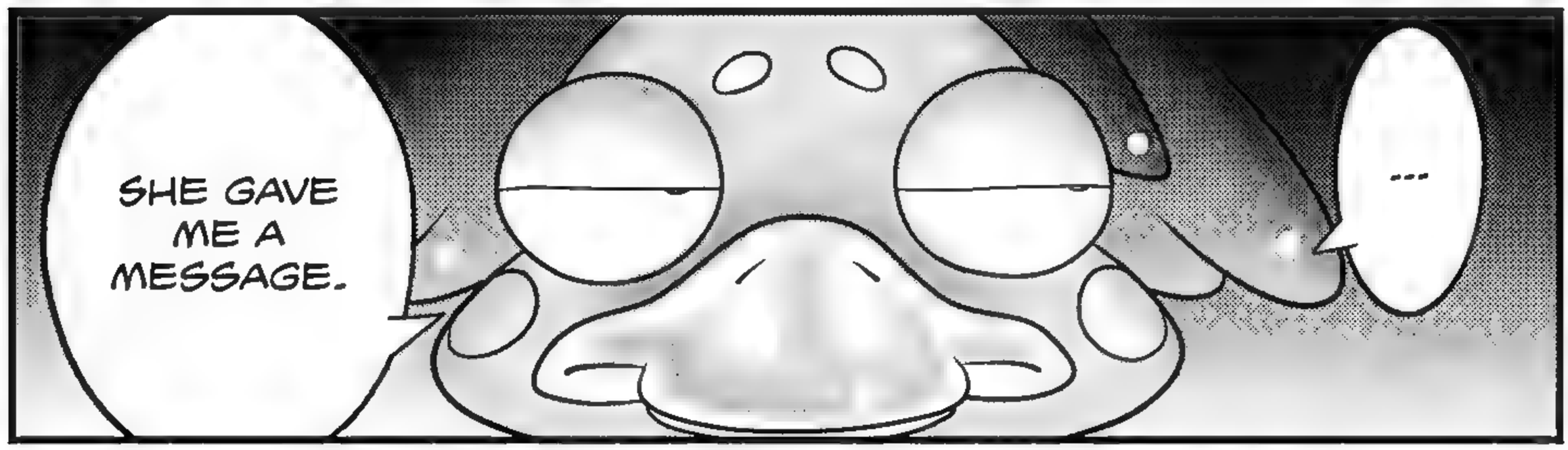
NOW ISHIKAWA'S GETTING ON MY CASE! HE WANTS ME TO SWITCH TO VOICE OPERATION AND—
HEY! BATOU'S MAKING FUN OF ME AGAIN!
GRK!

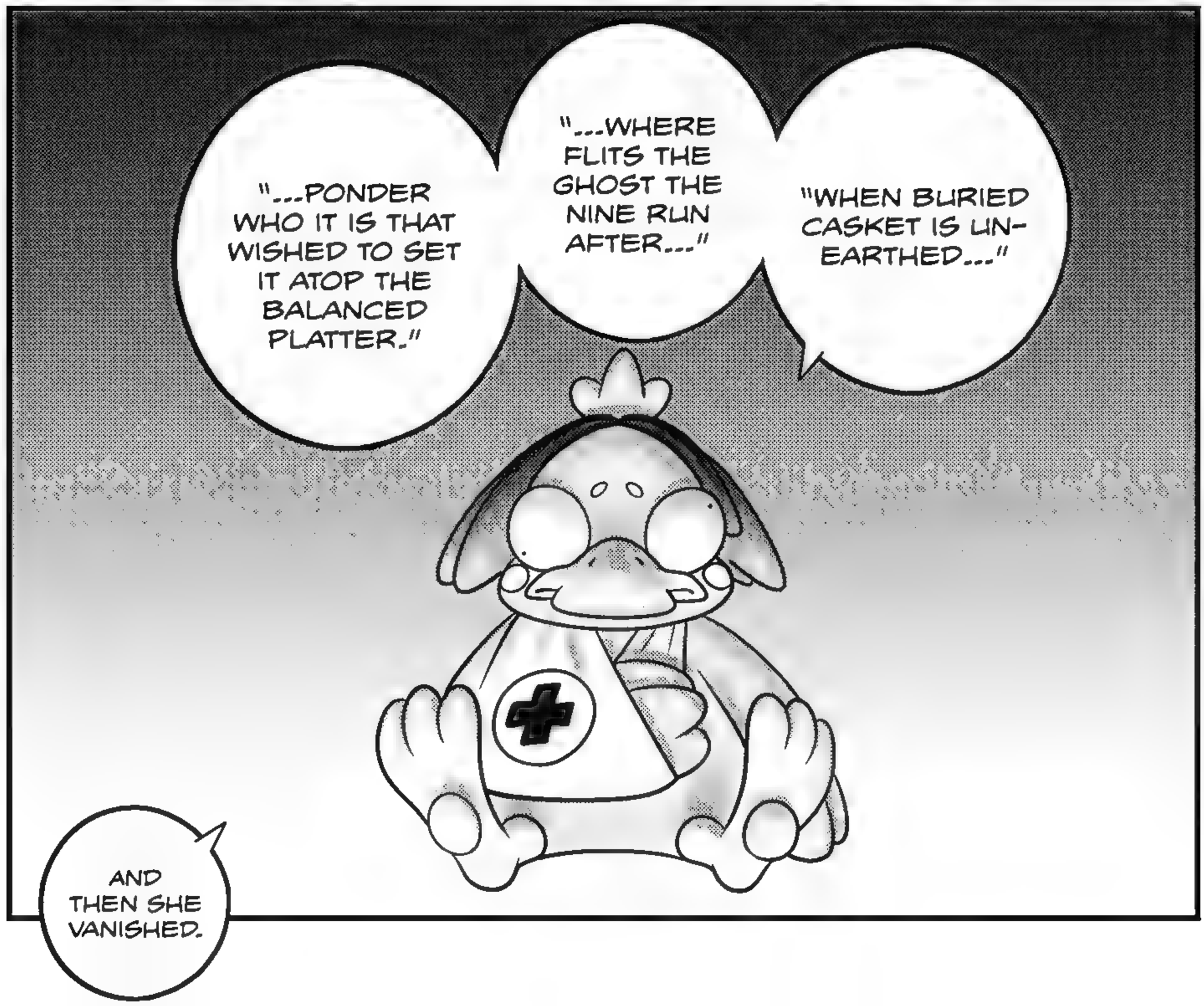
SO WHERE'D THIS EN-COUNTER TAKE PLACE?
YEAH. WE HEAR YOU.
HELLO-OOOO?
HUH?
HELLO? HELLO, CAN YOU GUYS HEAR ME?
FWAP

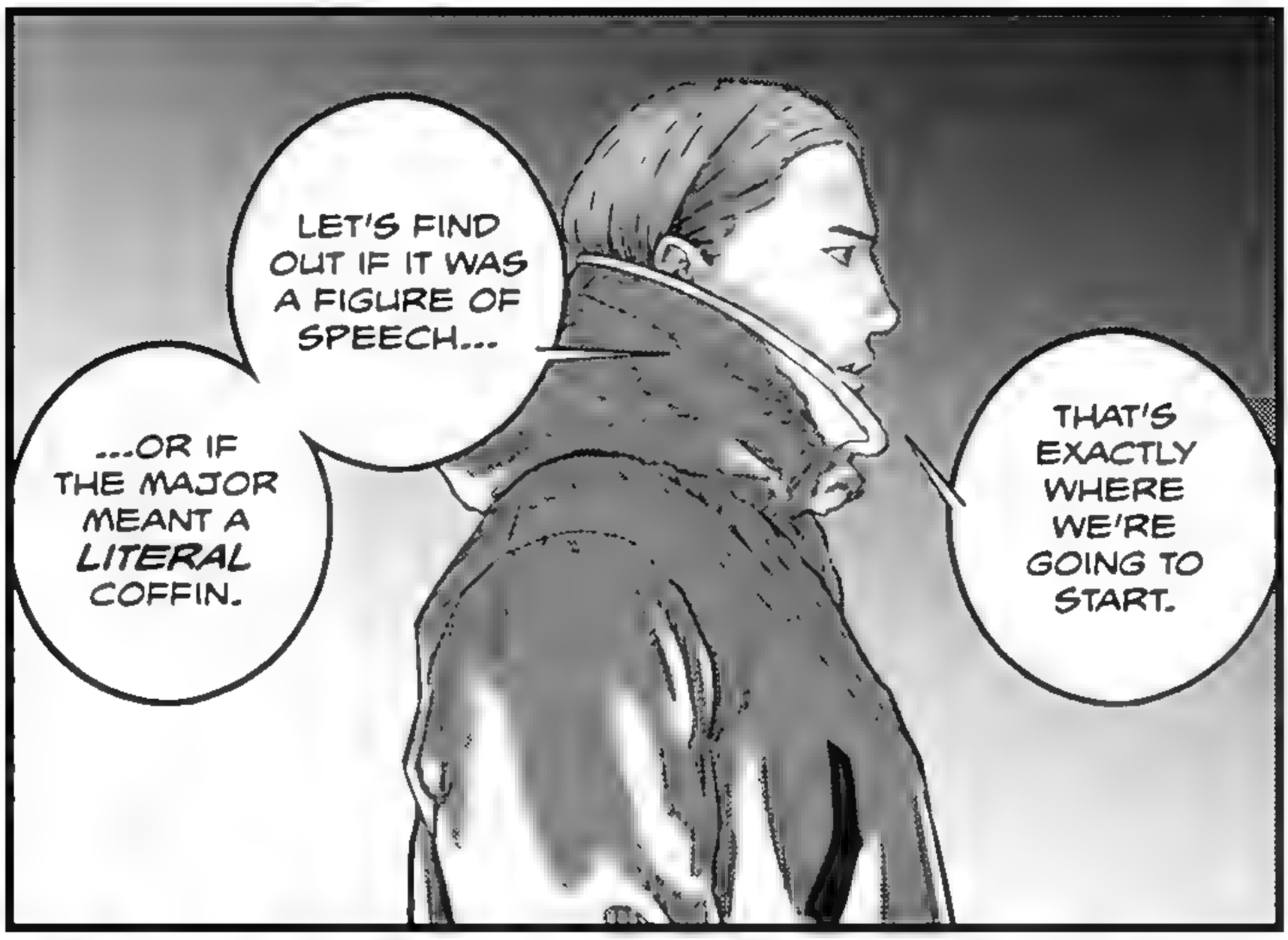

THE VERGE BETWEEN CONSCIOUS-NESS AND THE NEURONET. APPARENTLY, ANYWAY.
THE HELL'S THAT?
THERE'S STILL PLENTY WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE PLACE.

A RIVER-BANK. BUT NOT JUST ANY BANK. IT WAS THE SAI.

GET TO THE POINT, ROOKIE.
SHE WAS SUPER PRETTY, THOUGH, AND—
THAT'S HOW I FELT! IT WAS SO FRUSTRATING TRYING TO TALK TO HER.
WHY'S SHE HANGIN' OUT THERE? SHE BLOW A FUSE AFTER MERGING WITH THE PUPPETEER OR SOME-THIN'?


SHE GAVE ME A MESSAGE.
...


"...PONDER WHO IT IS THAT WISHED TO SET IT ATOP THE BALANCED PLATTER."
"...WHERE FLITS THE GHOST THE NINE RUN AFTER..."
"WHEN BURIED CASKET IS UN-EARTHED..."
AND THEN SHE VANISHED.


LET'S FIND OUT IF IT WAS A FIGURE OF SPEECH...
...OR IF THE MAJOR MEANT A *LITERAL* COFFIN.
THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE WE'RE GOING TO START.

THAT'S ALL?
THE HELL'S A CASKET GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

WE GOT ANYTHING ELSE TO GO ON?
THIS WHOLE THING'S ABOUT AS CLEAR AS MUD.

OH, COME ON! WHY DIDN'T YOU *LEAD* WITH THAT?!
THE THING WAS TRASHED. I DIDN'T GET MUCH OUT OF IT.

YEAH. I WAS ABLE TO MANAGE A HACK...
...ON ONE OF THE SQUAD MEMBERS WE ENCOUNTERED IN ATERUI.

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

BUT I MANAGED TO SCROUNGE UP ONE INTERESTING DETAIL.

DOESN'T ADD UP, DOES IT? NO PRIVATE FIRM HAS ACCESS TO PROSTHETICS LIKE THAT. SOMETHING REEKS.

A CIVILIAN OUTFIT?

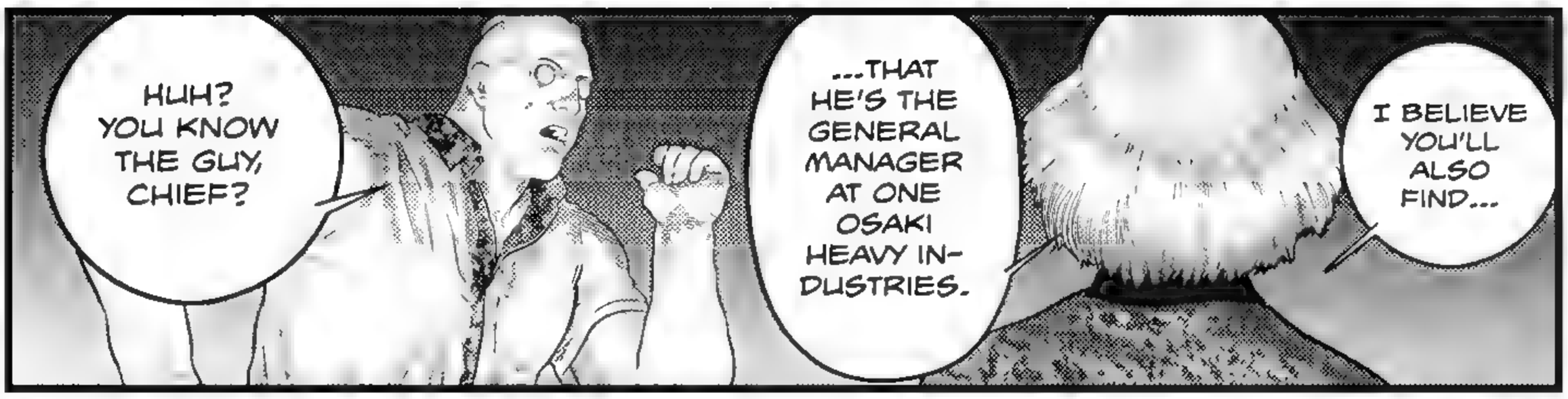
IT SEEMS THEY WERE IN THE EMPLOY...

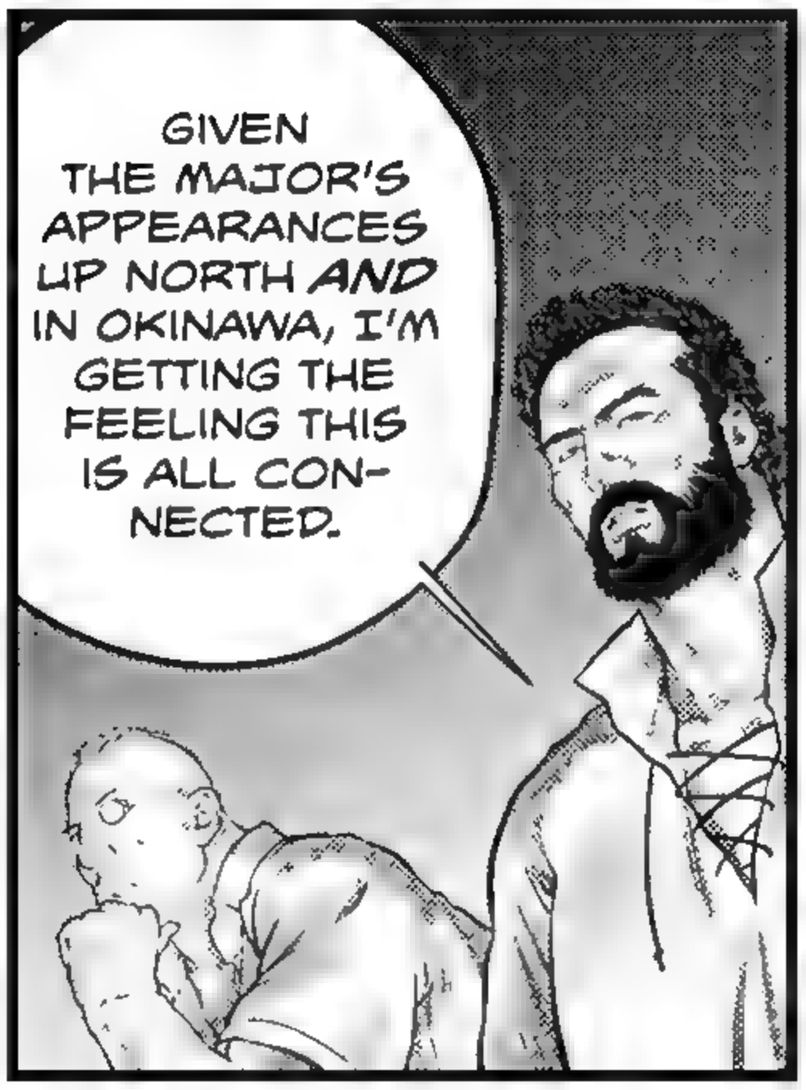
...OF A PRIVATE SECURITY FIRM.

?!

I WAS ABLE TO CROSS-REFERENCE HIS NAME ON A LIST OF FORMER GROUND FORCES ELITES.

THIS IS THE FACE OF THE COMPANY. TOMARU OTOMO.

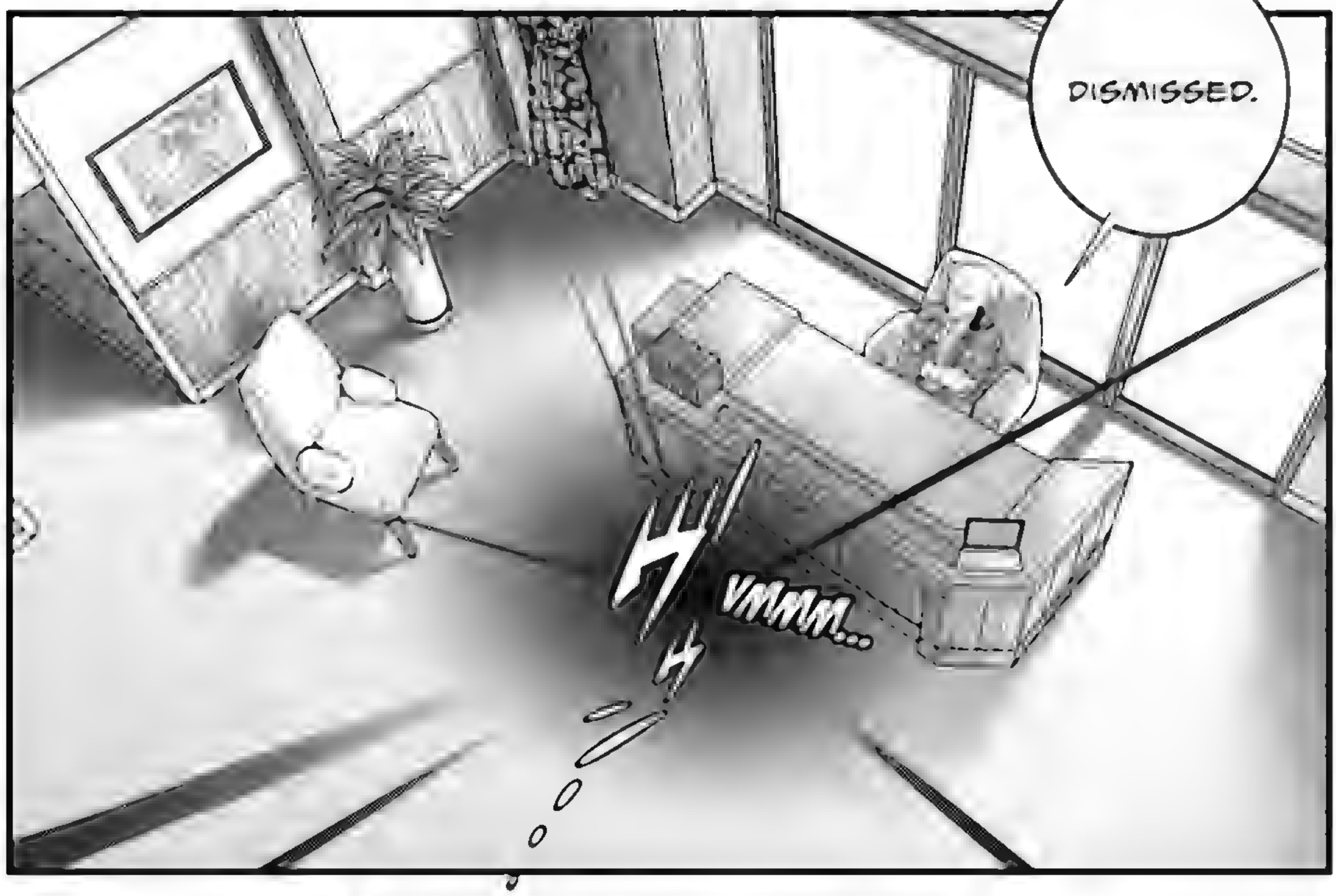

HUH? YOU KNOW THE GUY, CHIEF?
...THAT HE'S THE GENERAL MANAGER AT ONE OSAKI HEAVY IN-DUSTRIES.
I BELIEVE YOU'LL ALSO FIND...

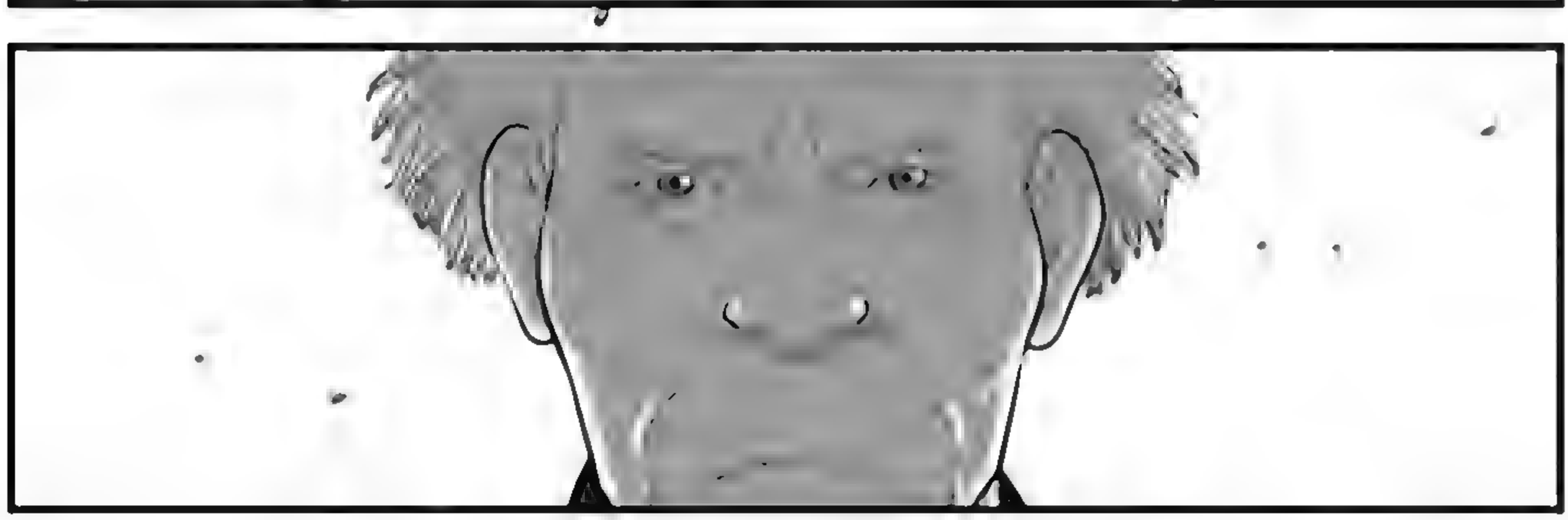

GIVEN THE MAJOR'S APPEARANCES UP NORTH AND IN OKINAWA, I'M GETTING THE FEELING THIS IS ALL CON-NECTED.

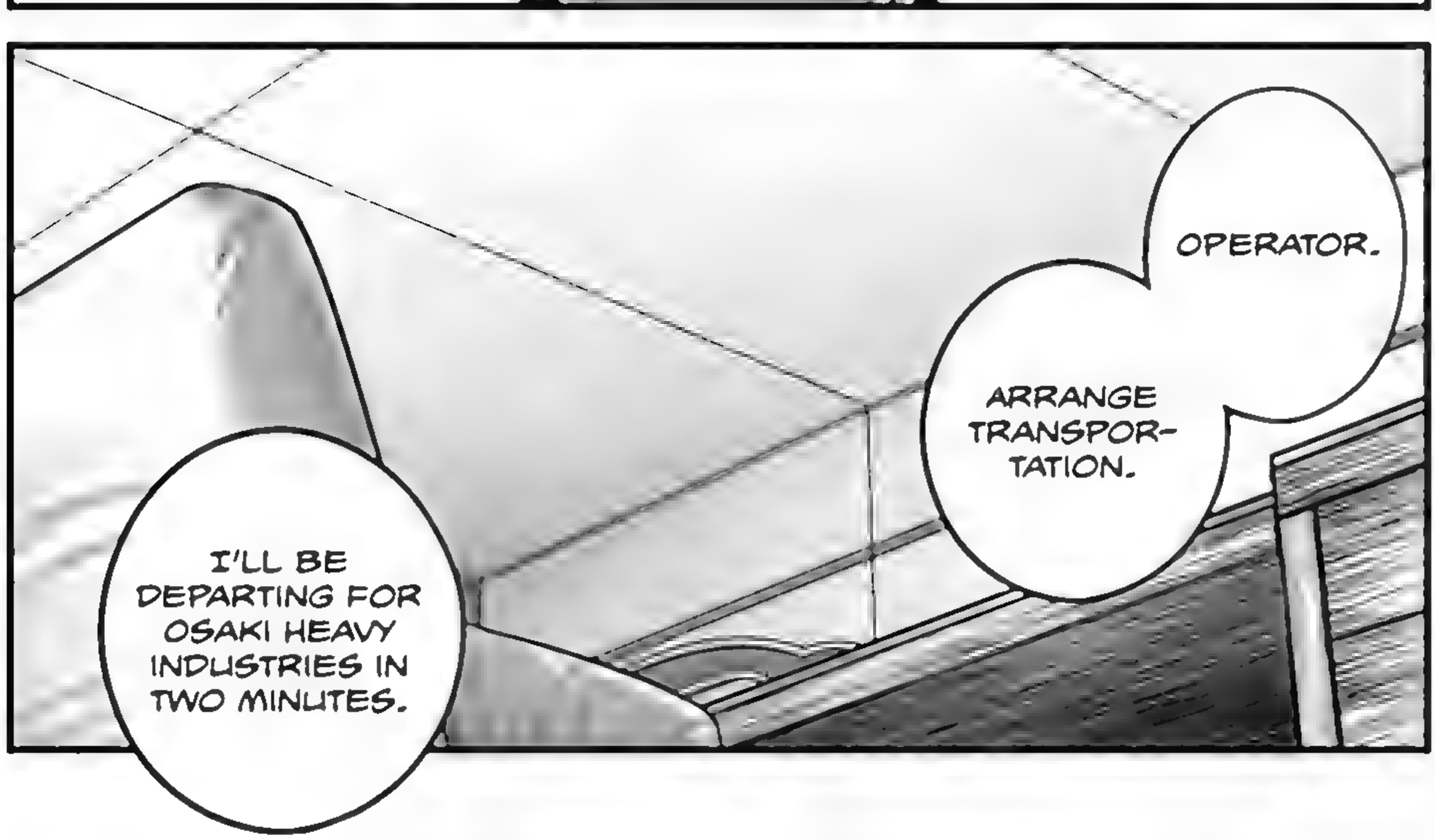
...

THEY'RE COUNCILOR MIKOMOTO'S BIGGEST CAMPAIGN DONOR.
OSAKI. WE'VE BEEN HEARING A LOT OF THAT NAME.

I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME I PAID THEM A PERSONAL VISIT.
CONTINUE YOUR PRESENT ASSIGNMENTS, AND KEEP A SHARP EYE OUT FOR ANY FURTHER TIES TO THE COMPANY.


DISMISSED.
HMMM...



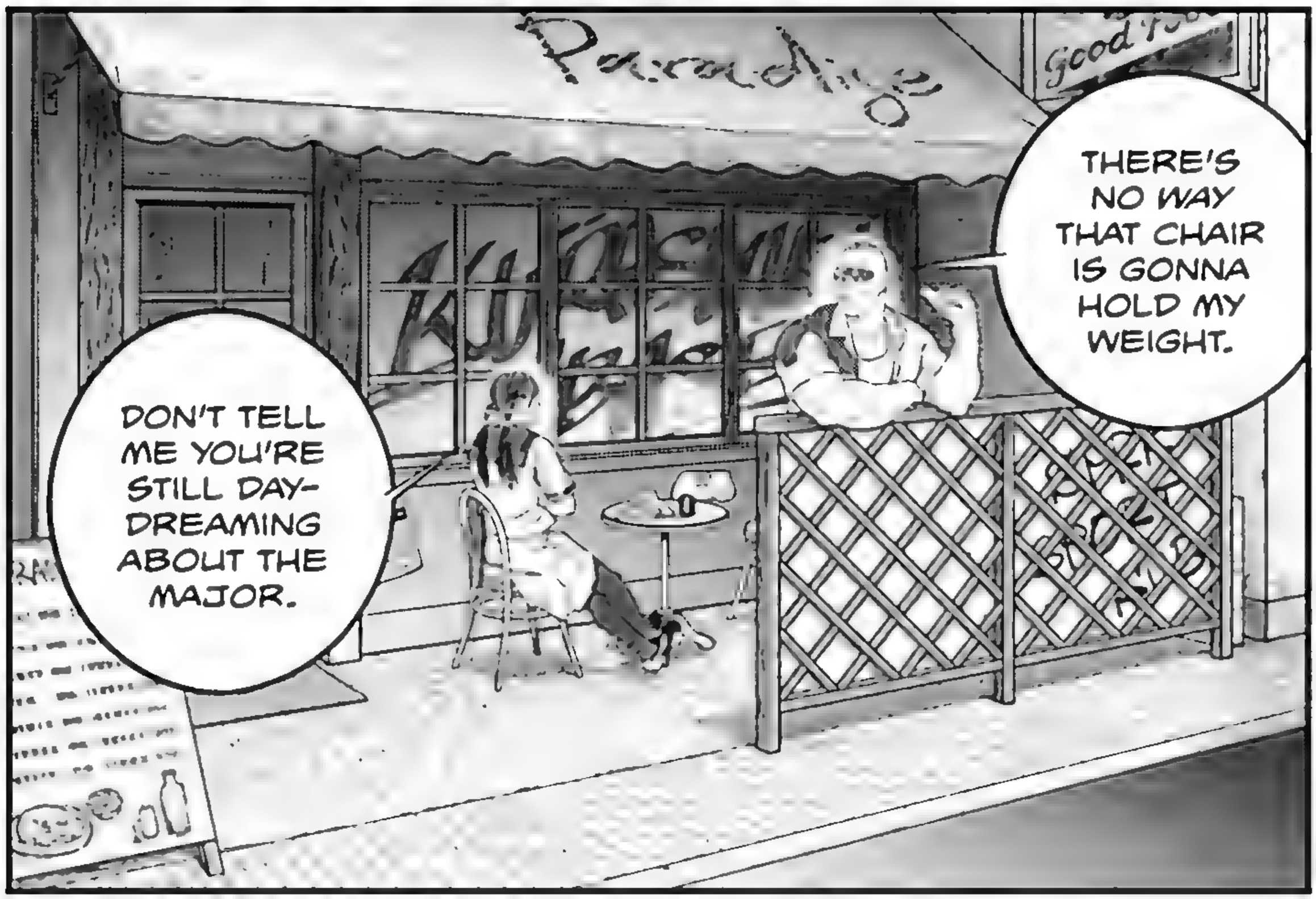

OPERATOR.
ARRANGE TRANSPOR-TATION.
I'LL BE DEPARTING FOR OSAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES IN TWO MINUTES.

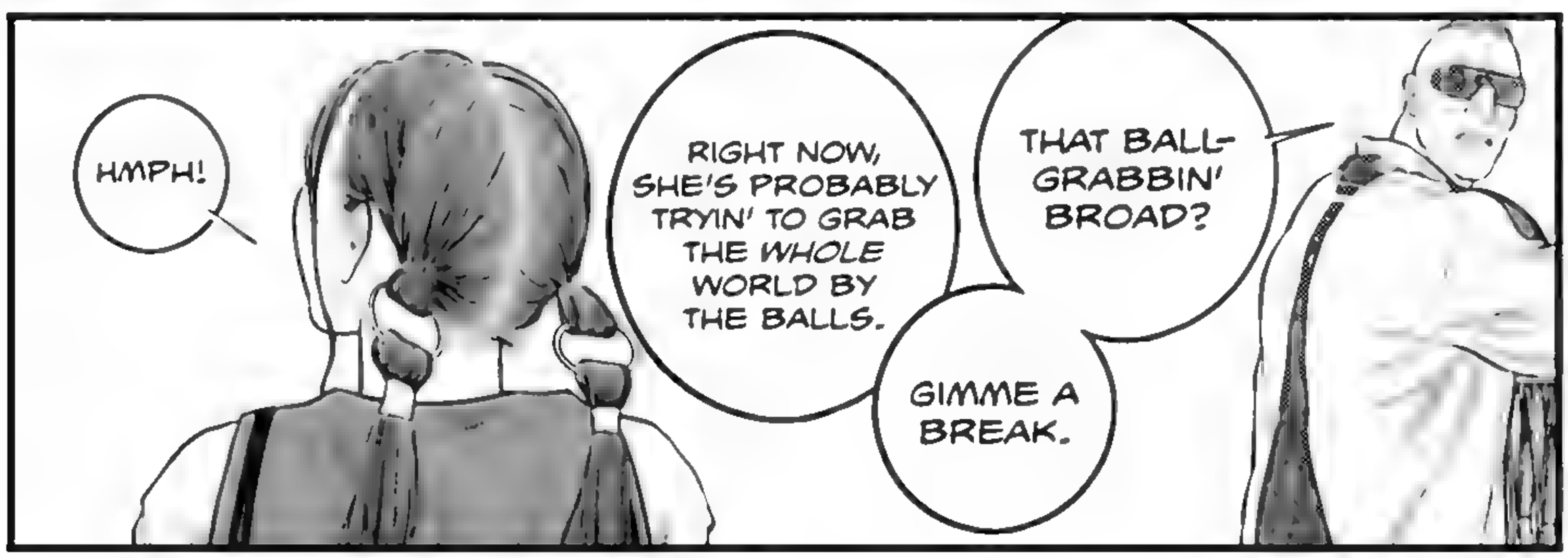
BEER
HOTEL

YOU'RE KEEPING ME ON EDGE.
WILL YOU SIT DOWN ALREADY?

A Y
COS
TACOS
10
PUPPET

YOU KIDDIN'?


THERE'S NO WAY THAT CHAIR IS GONNA HOLD MY WEIGHT.
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE STILL DAY-DREAMING ABOUT THE MAJOR.


HMPH!
RIGHT NOW, SHE'S PROBABLY TRYIN' TO GRAB THE *WHOLE* WORLD BY THE BALLS.
THAT BALL-GRABBIN' BROAD?
GIMME A BREAK.

?!
C'MON. WHY YOU GOTTA–

東風

THE KID WITH 'EM. THAT'S SHOH HASHIKAMI.

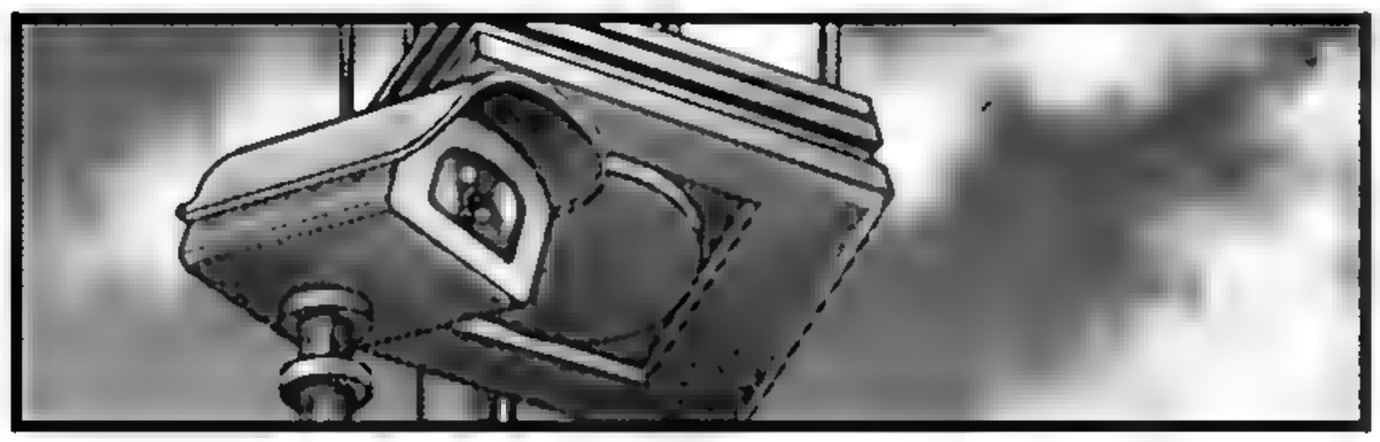
QINGSHE GOT YOU JUMPY?
IT'S NOT THAT.

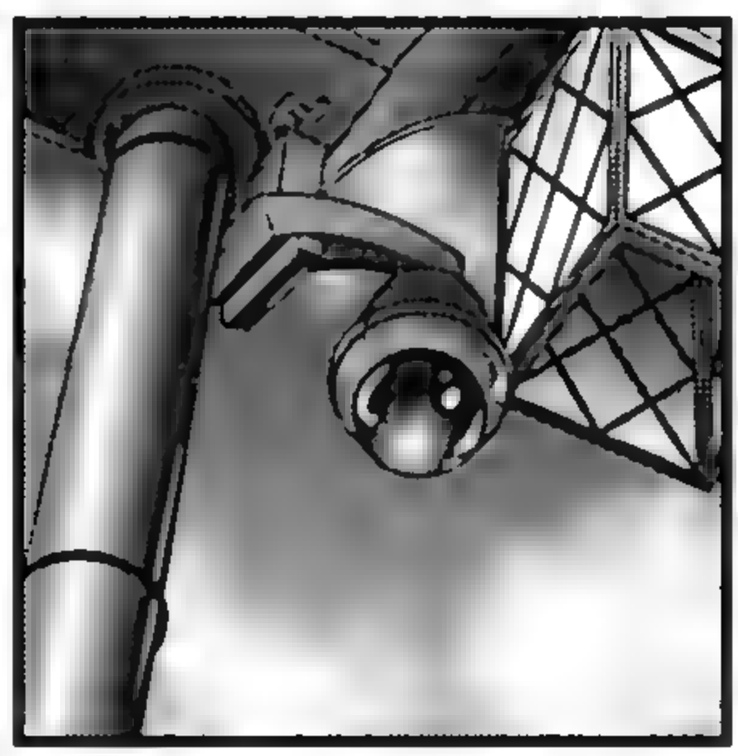
YEAH. WHY THE HELL'S HE TAKIN' A WALK WITH THE QINGSHE?

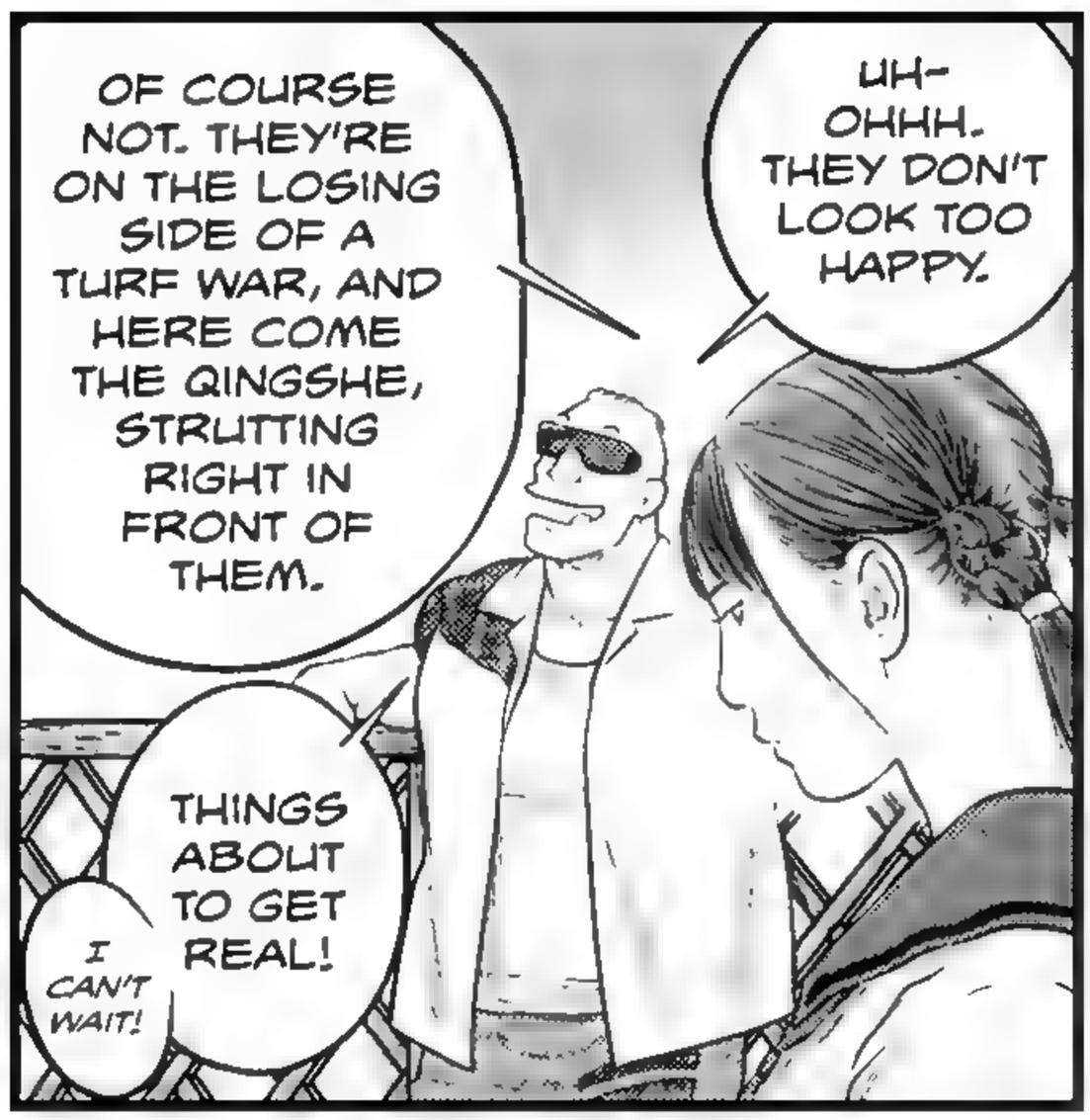
AH, THE OSAKI MECHANIC WHO TAMPERED WITH THE SERVICE RECORDS.

...AND THE SITUATION ON THE ISLANDS.

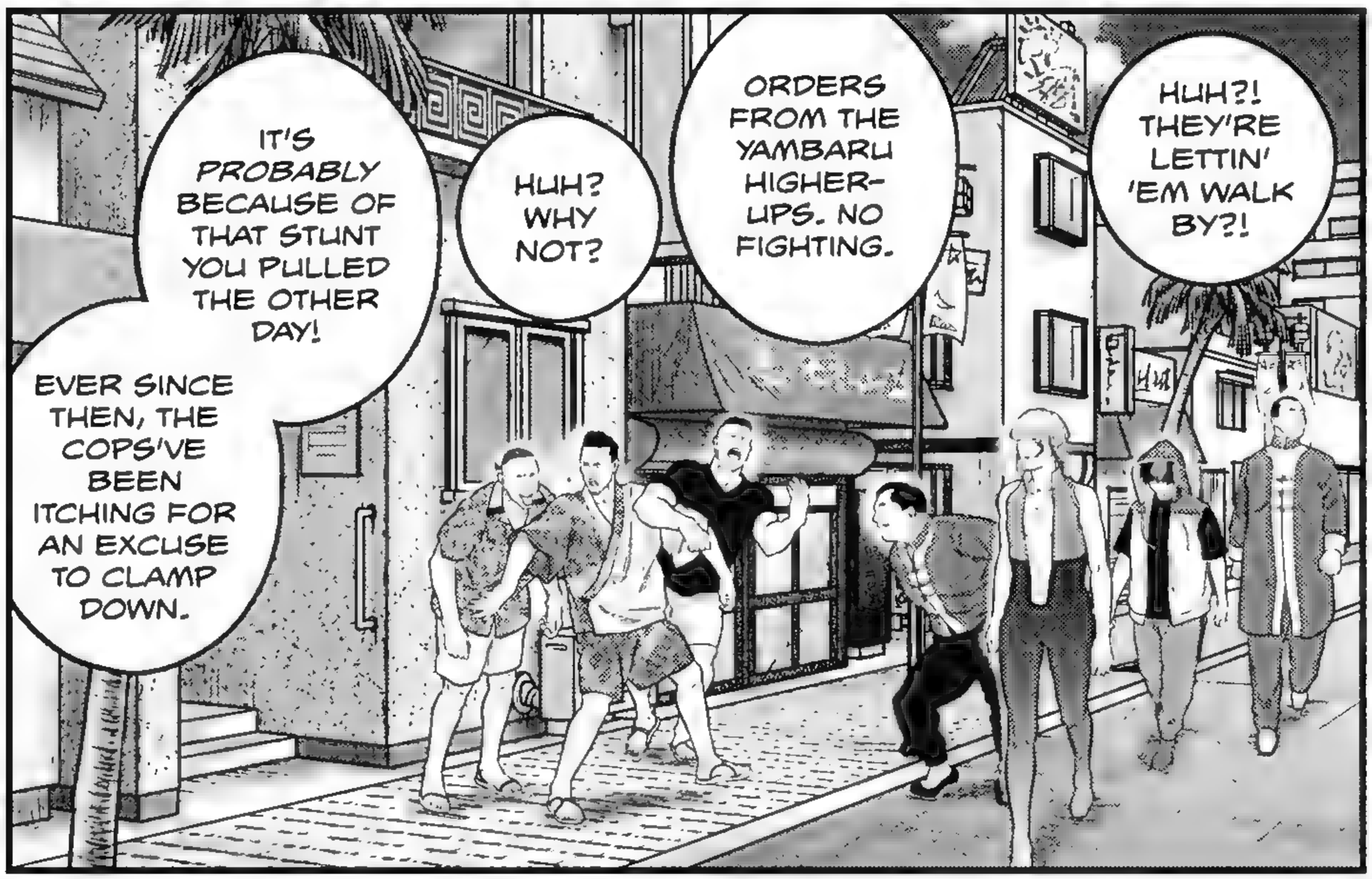
IT'S STARTING TO LOOK LIKE HE MIGHT BE THE TIE BETWEEN OSAKI...





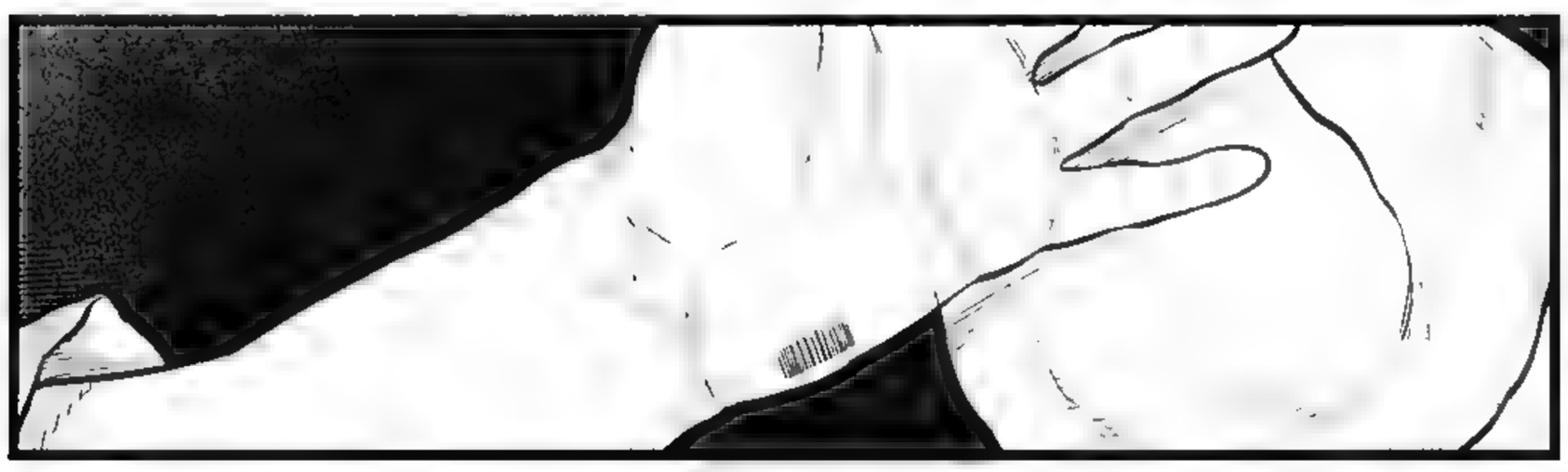

OF COURSE NOT. THEY'RE ON THE LOSING SIDE OF A TURF WAR, AND HERE COME THE QINGSHE, STRUTTING RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.
UH-OHHH. THEY DON'T LOOK TOO HAPPY.
THINGS ABOUT TO GET REAL!
I CAN'T WAIT!

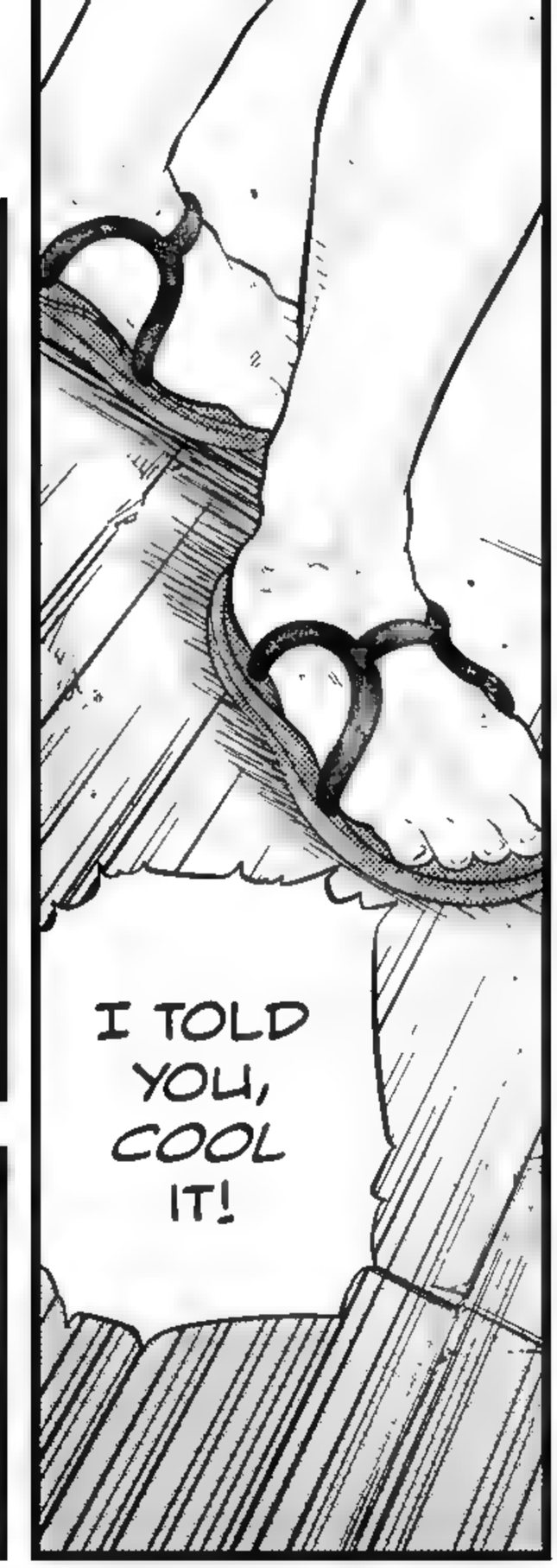
KSRXX...
LOOK AT THAT. YAMBARU THUGS JUST DOWN THE ROAD.
AH.


IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THAT STUNT YOU PULLED THE OTHER DAY!
EVER SINCE THEN, THE COPS'VE BEEN ITCHING FOR AN EXCUSE TO CLAMP DOWN.
HUH? WHY NOT?
ORDERS FROM THE YAMBARU HIGHER-UPS. NO FIGHTING.
HUH?! THEY'RE LETTIN' 'EM WALK BY?!

FINE. WHATEVER. I'M GONNA TAIL THE KID.
THOUGHT WE WERE GONNA SEE SOME SYNDICATE ON TRIAD ACTION.
AW, GEEZ. NO FUN AT ALL.

HEY!!
CUT IT OUT!
WE'VE GOT OUR ORDERS. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!




I TOLD YOU, COOL IT!

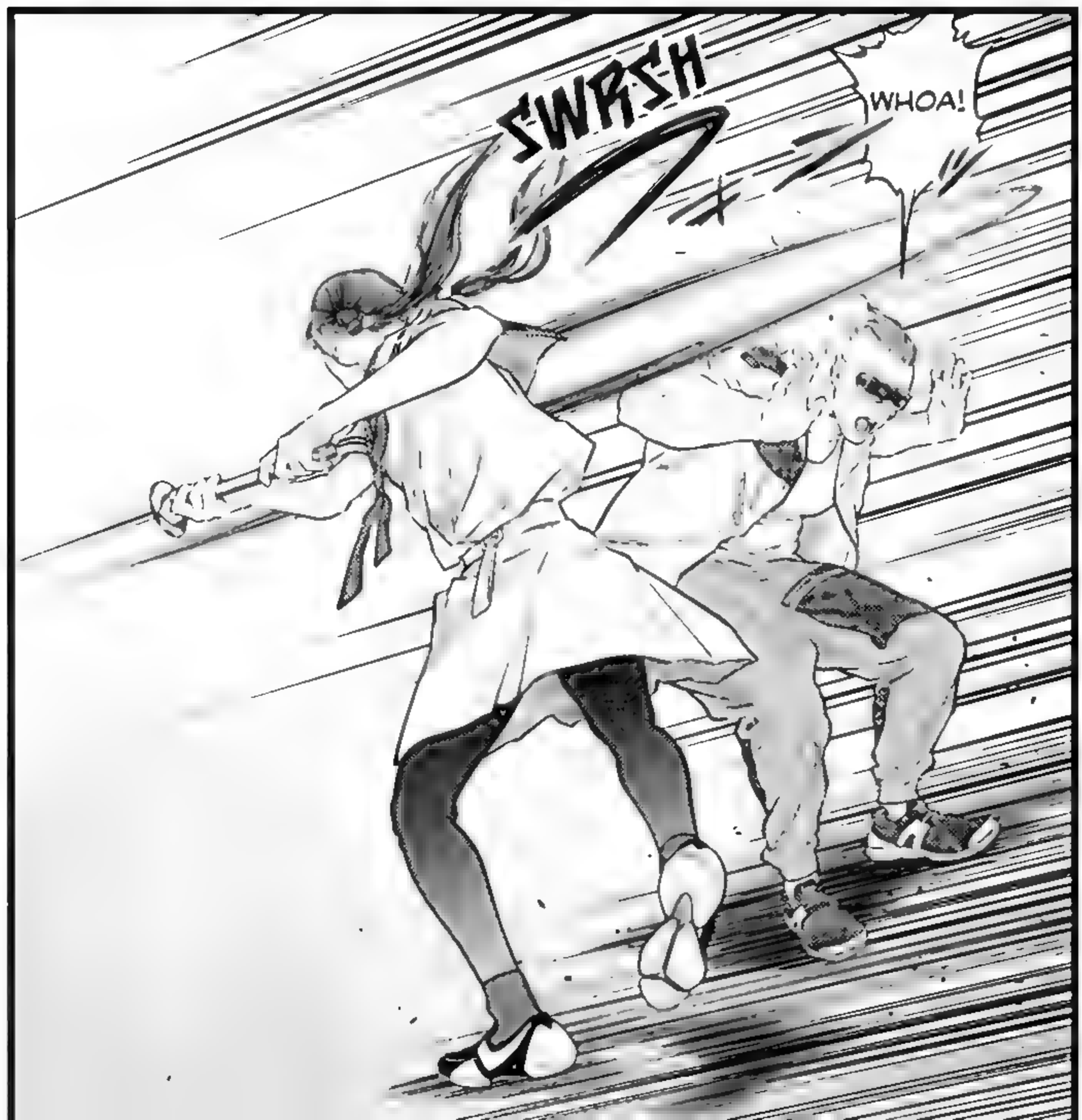
TSK!
HURRY UP!
...HEY, SMART-ASS.

H...
HANG ON. MY SHOE'S UNTIED...

BZZT
YOUR SHOES DON'T HAVE LACES.
TIK
TIK
TIK
TIK
TIK
BEEP
GRAAAA

WHAT GIVES? THOUGHT YOU SAID THEY HAD ORDERS.
CLATTER

HUH?
GUESS THE YAMBARU ARE STARTIN' SOMETHING AFTER ALL.
FWSH


SWRSH
WHOA!

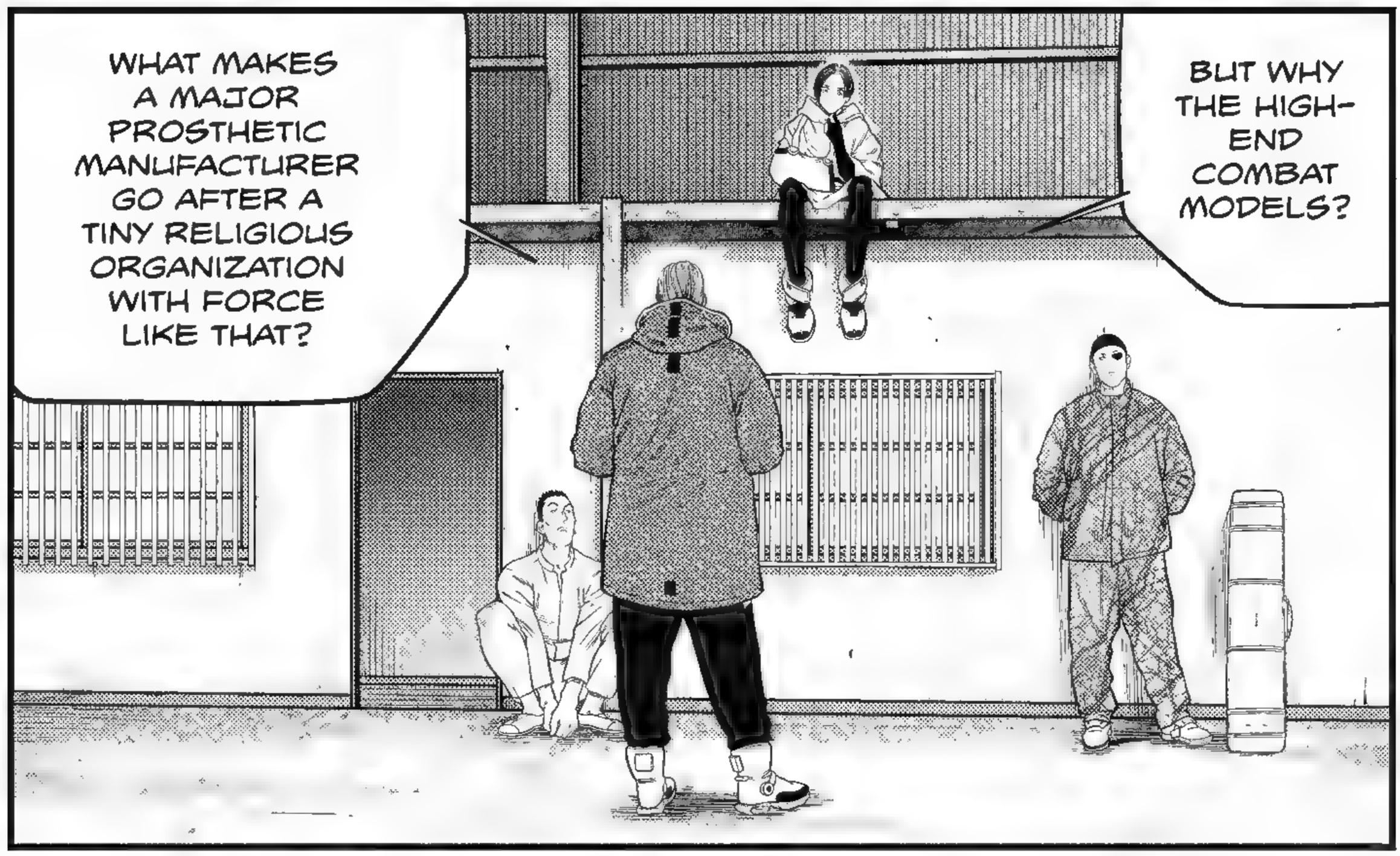
HEY. YOU LISTENING TO M—

?!

THE HELL'S GOTTEN INTO—

IF THIS OTOMO GUY'S WITH OSAKI, AND HE ORDERED THE ASSAULT ON THE VILLAGE...

...THEN IT'S PRETTY CLEAR THAT UP HERE IN THE NORTH, THE LINK BACK TO OSAKI IS IN ATERUI ITSELF.


WHAT MAKES A MAJOR PROSTHETIC MANUFACTURER GO AFTER A TINY RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATION WITH FORCE LIKE THAT?
BUT WHY THE HIGH-END COMBAT MODELS?

TSK, TSK. AMA-TEURS.

NOPE. KENBISHI'S THE MAJOR PLAYER WHEN IT COMES TO MILITARY-GRADE STUFF.
OSAKI'S WAY ON THE OTHER END OF THE MARKET. MODELS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORK. CHEAP STUFF.
OSAKI DOESN'T EVEN MAKE COMBAT PROSTHETICS, DOES IT?

YEAH. I EVEN SAW IT INSTALLED IN THAT OLD ALPHA UNIT IN THE VILLAGE.

THINK. OSAKI'S GOT THOSE NEUROMODULES. Y'KNOW, THEIR REMOTE MAINTENANCE SYSTEMS. THEY HOLD ALL THE PATENTS FOR THAT STUFF, AND THEY'VE GOT THE GLOBAL MARKET BASICALLY CORNERED.

INCLUDING MILITARY. EVERY ARMY IN THE WORLD USES THAT TECH.

THEY DO?

LOOK. IT WORKS LIKE THIS...

HUH? MY JOINTS ARE ACTIN' UP.

WOO-HOO!

ぴょーん

SPROING

ADJUST-MENTS COMPLETE.

YOU GET IT NOW? IT PROVIDES MINOR TWEAKS TO YOUR SYSTEM WITHOUT A VISIT TO THE SHOP!

HUH. HOW LOVELY.

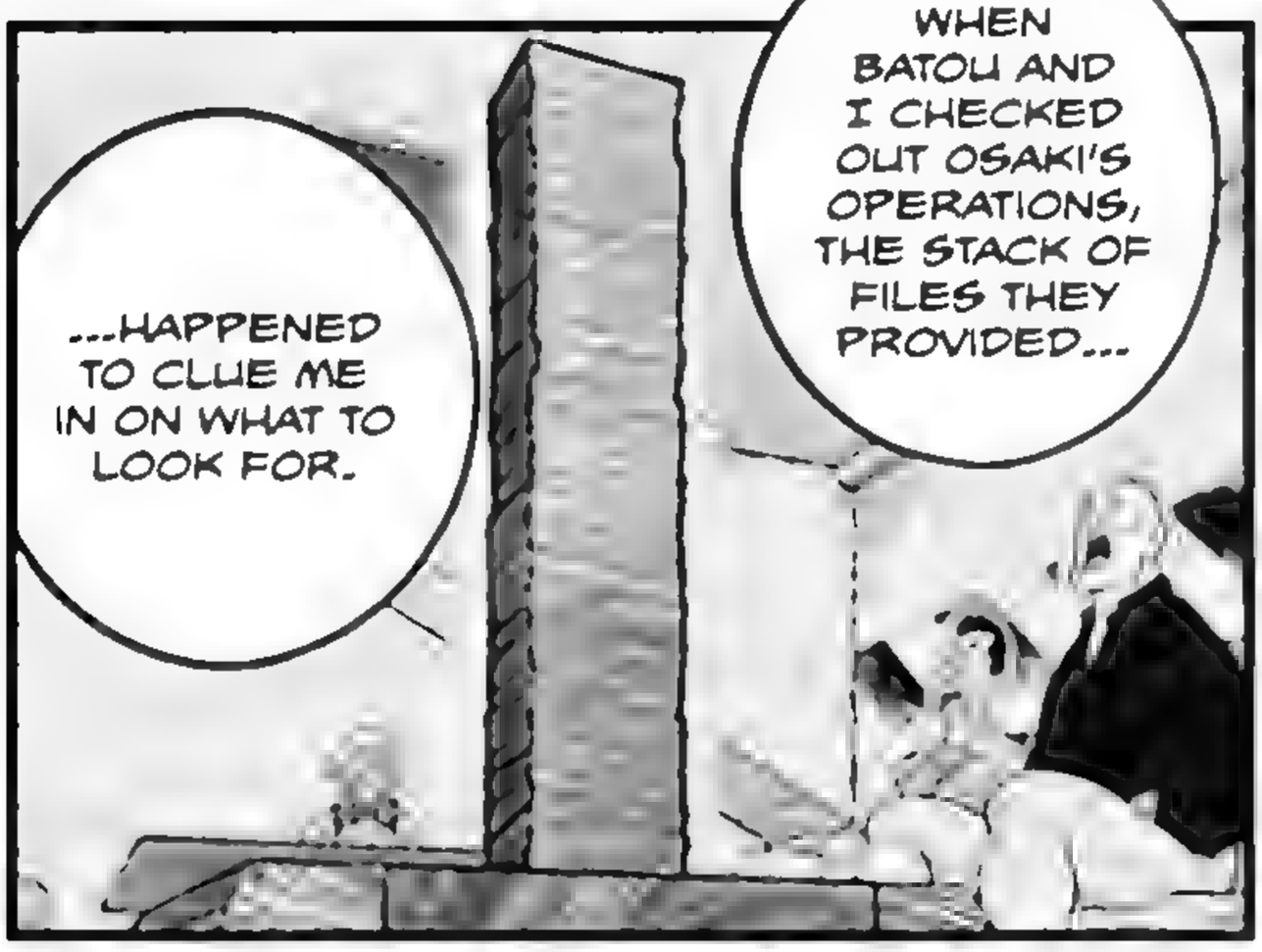
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "REMOTE"?

FOR PATCHES AND STUFF. AS LONG AS THE PROSTHETIC'S CONNECTED TO THE NET, IT CAN UPDATE AUTOMATICALLY.

I'M STILL LOST.

...COULD START ORDERING EQUIPPED PROSTHETICS AROUND LIKE *PUPPETS*.

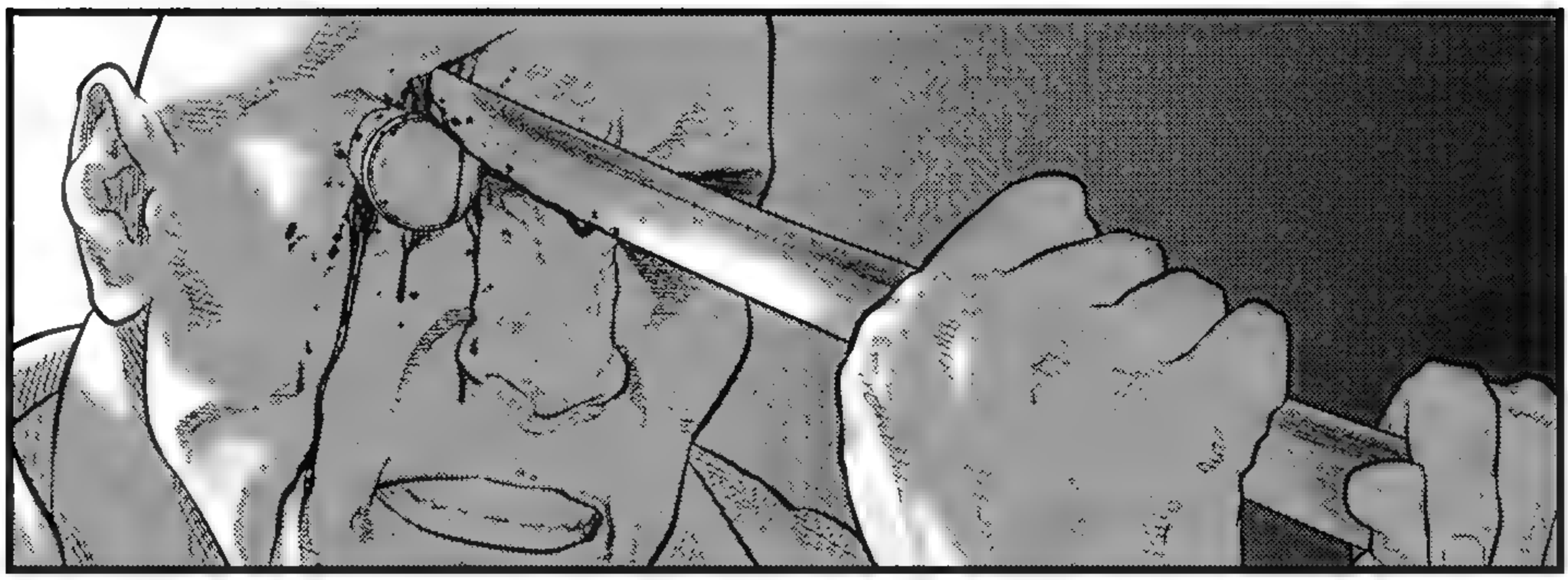
AND THAT MEANS SOMEONE IN CONTROL OF THE SYSTEM...

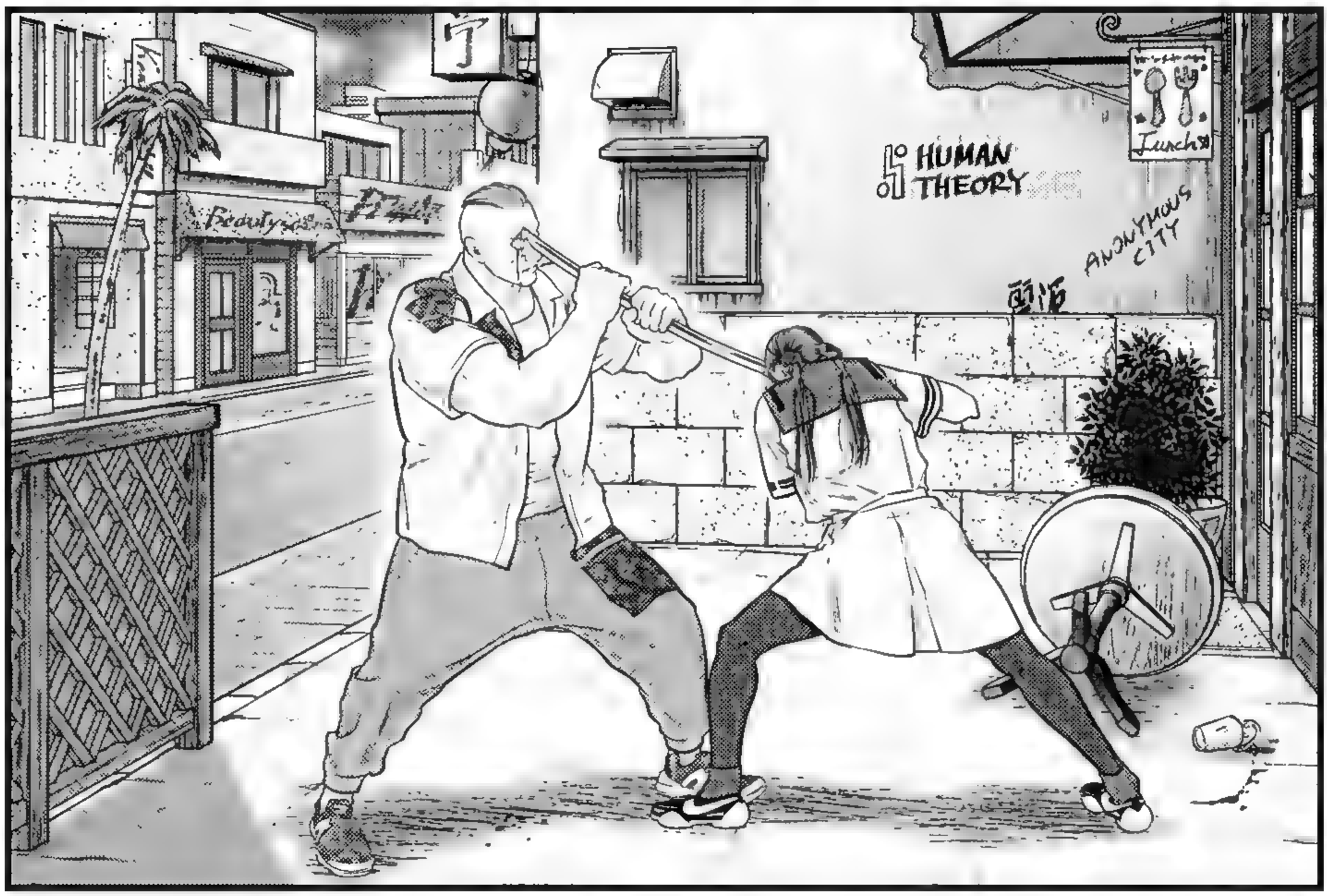

...HAPPENED TO CLUE ME IN ON WHAT TO LOOK FOR.
WHEN BATOU AND I CHECKED OUT OSAKI'S OPERATIONS, THE STACK OF FILES THEY PROVIDED...

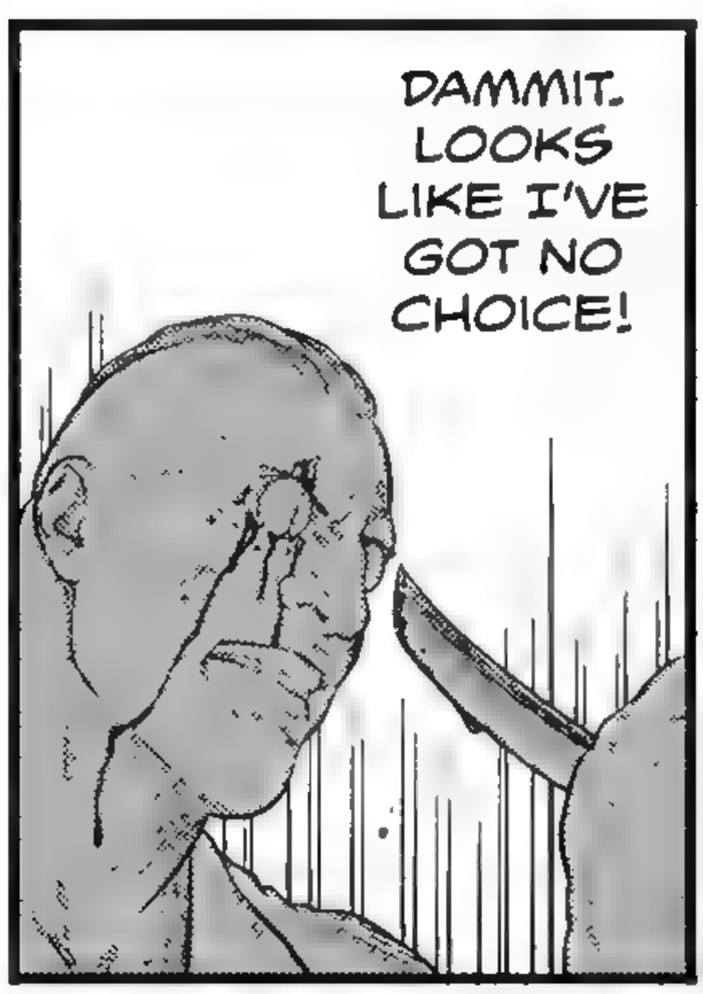
YOU'LL KNOW A PROSTHETIC'S INSTALLED WITH THE REMOTE MAINTENANCE SYSTEM...

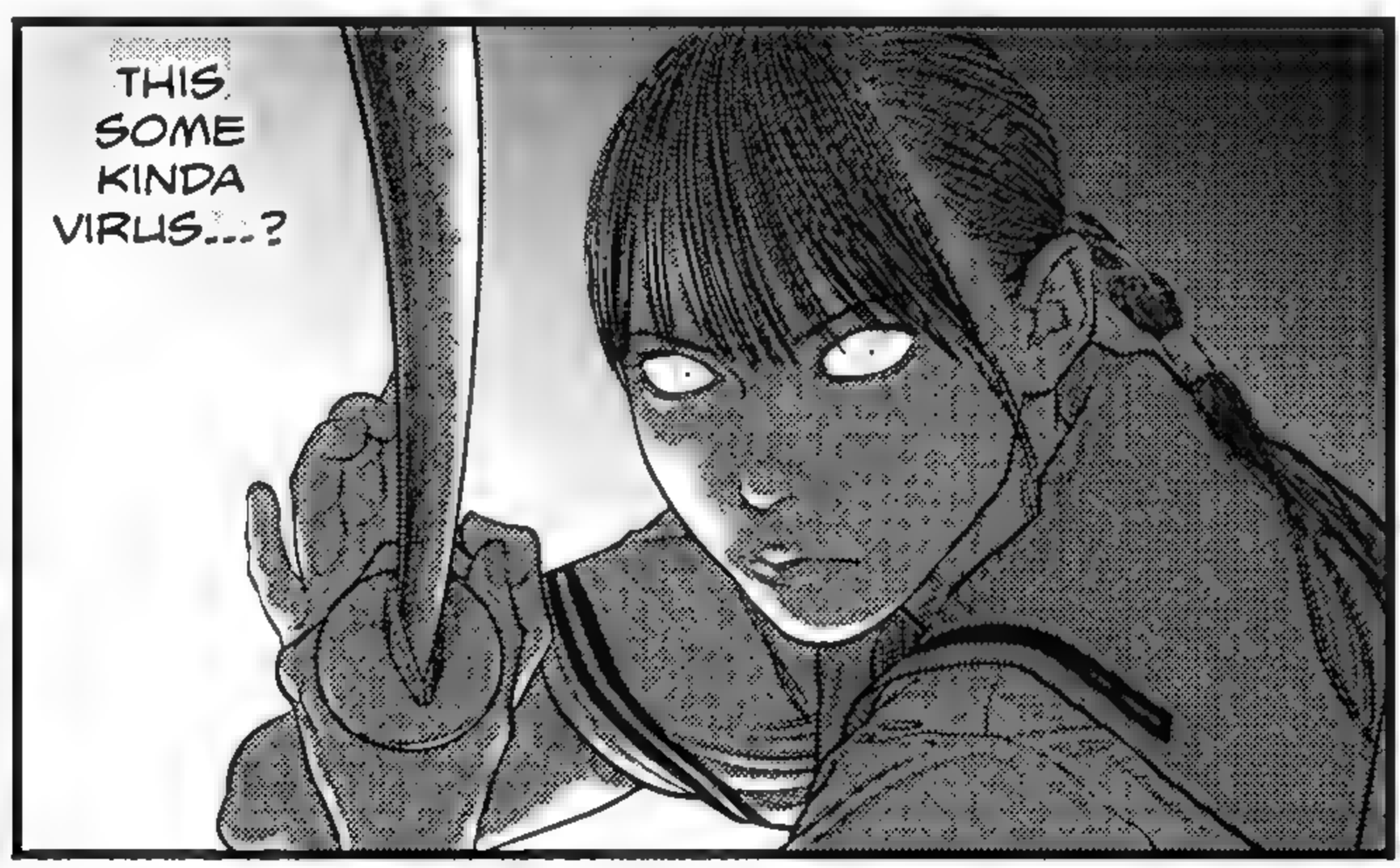
RIGHT! THE GHOST-HACKS FROM LAST WEEK!
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN HOW SHOH HASHIKAMI EXECUTED HIS ATTACK ON THE COUNCILOR.
BINGO.

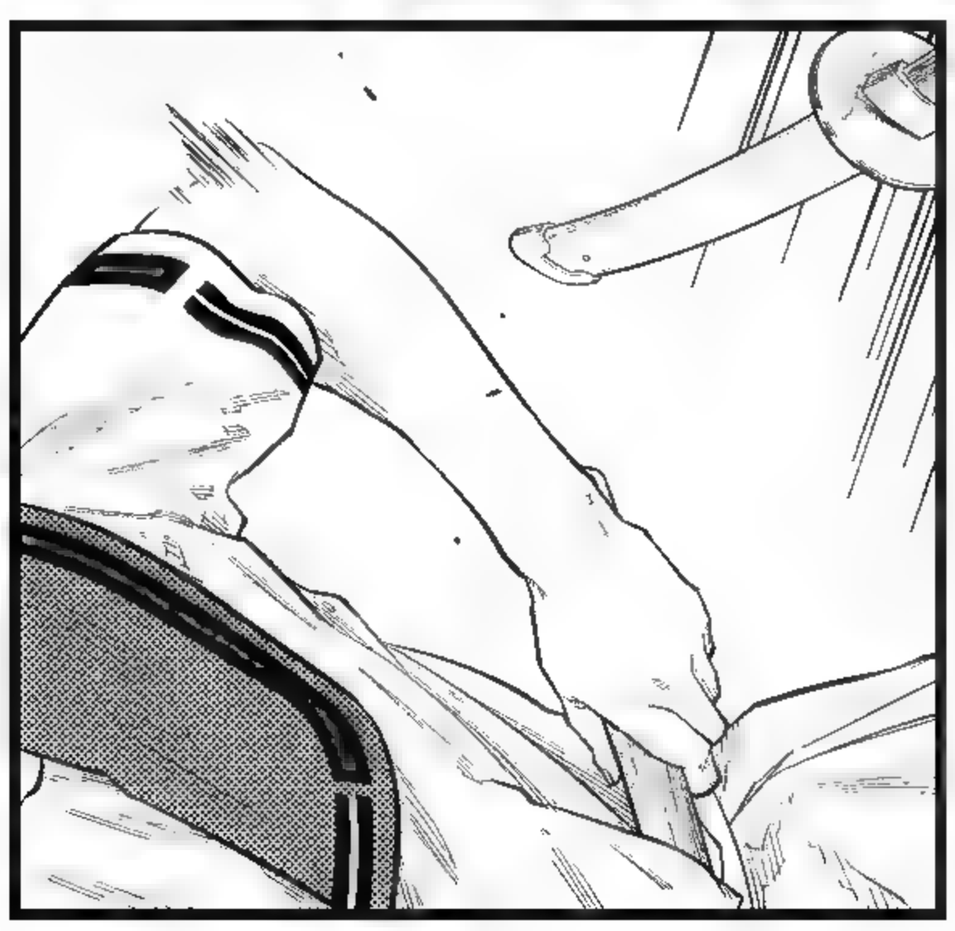
THERE'LL BE AN OSAKI-ISSUED BARCODE ETCHED INTO THE PALM.
...IF YOU CHECK THE LEFT HAND.

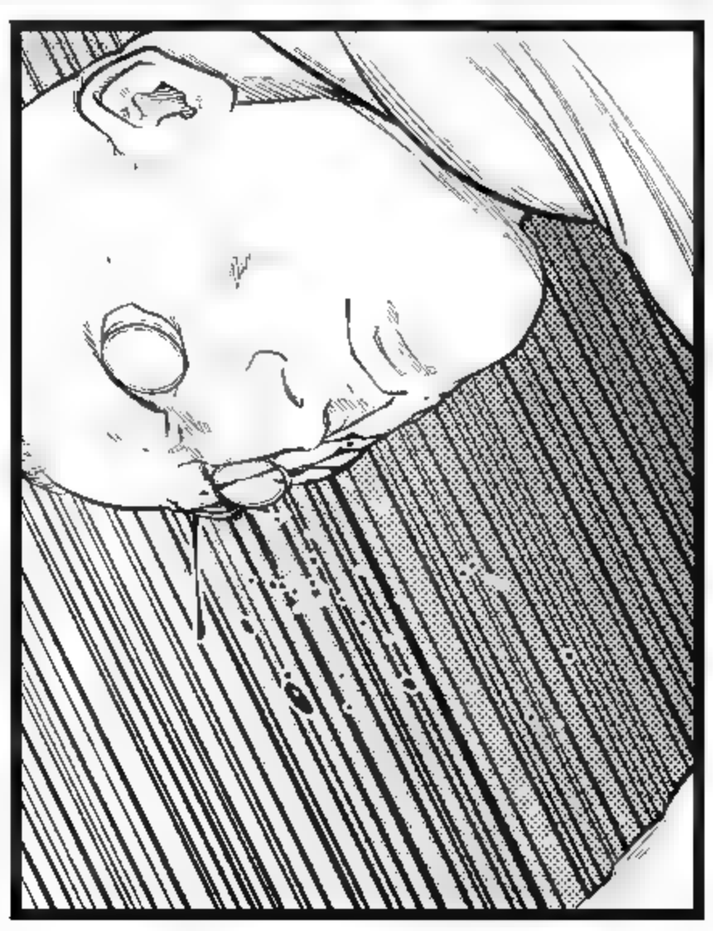


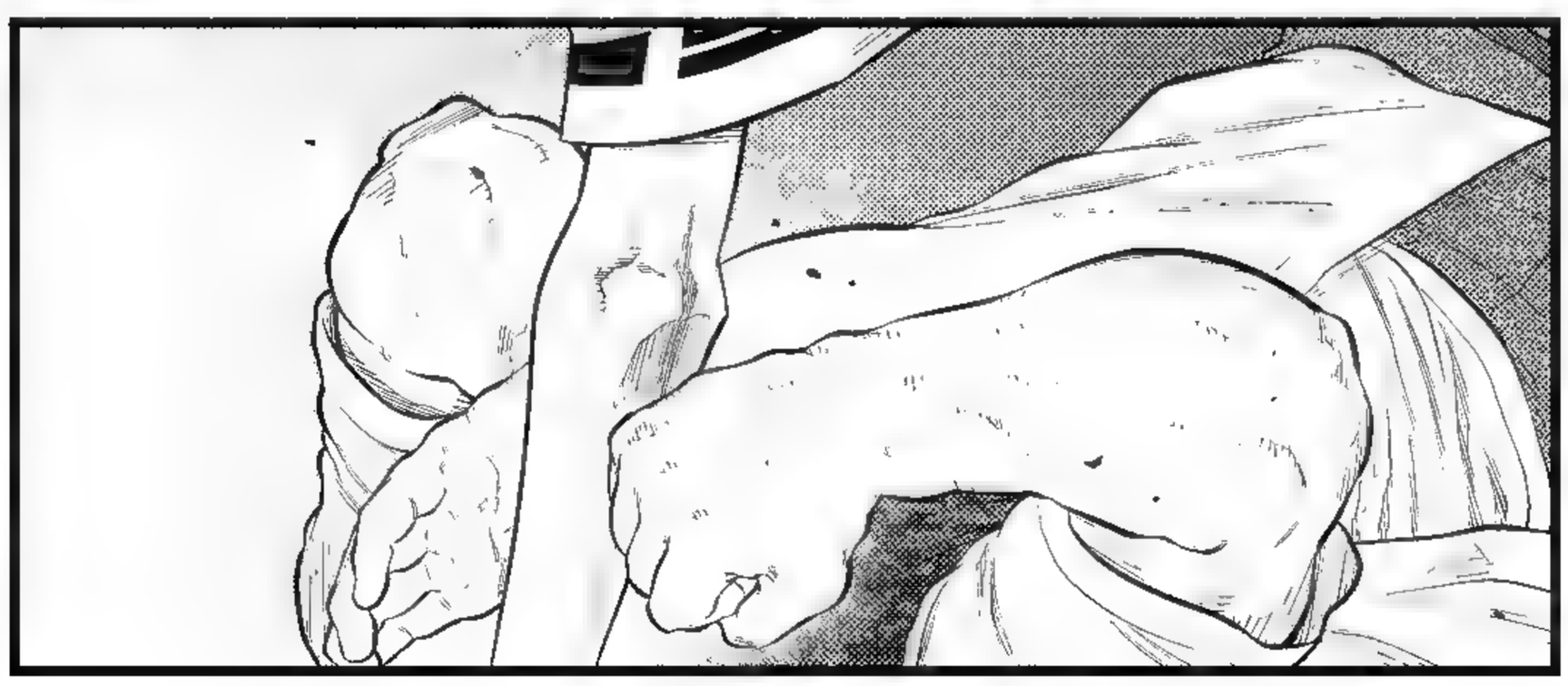

HUMAN THEORY
Lunch
ANONYMOUS CITY
Beauty

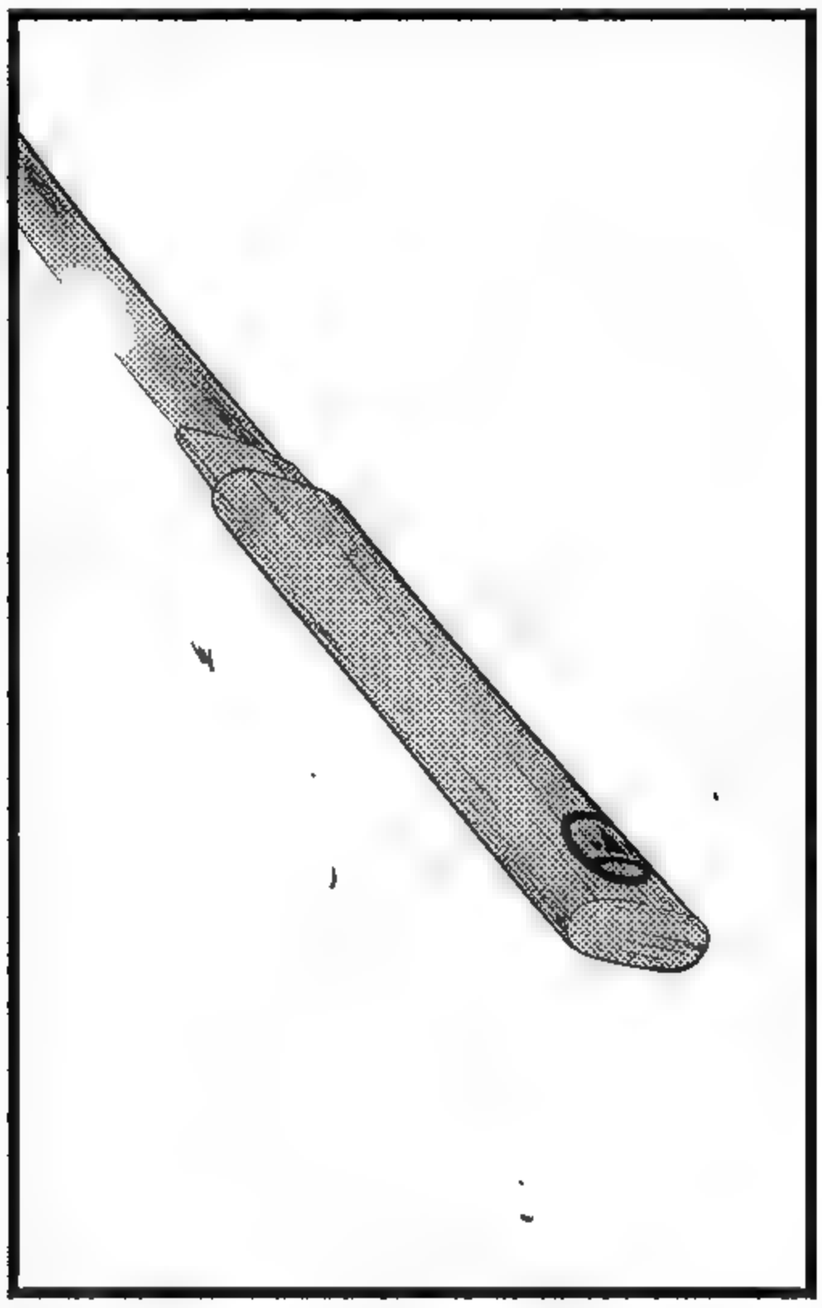

DAMMIT. LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT NO CHOICE!

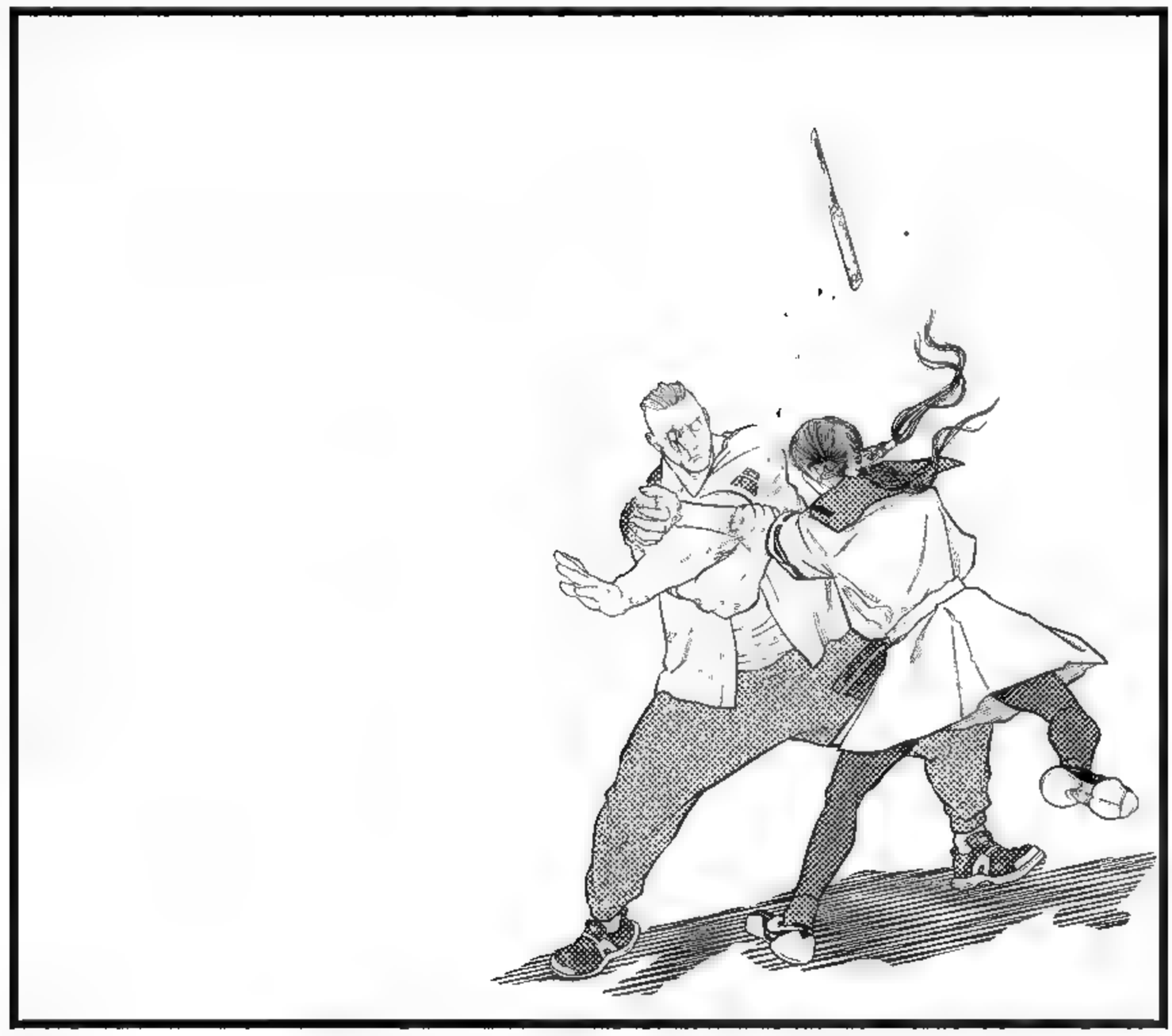

THIS SOME KINDA VIRUS...?

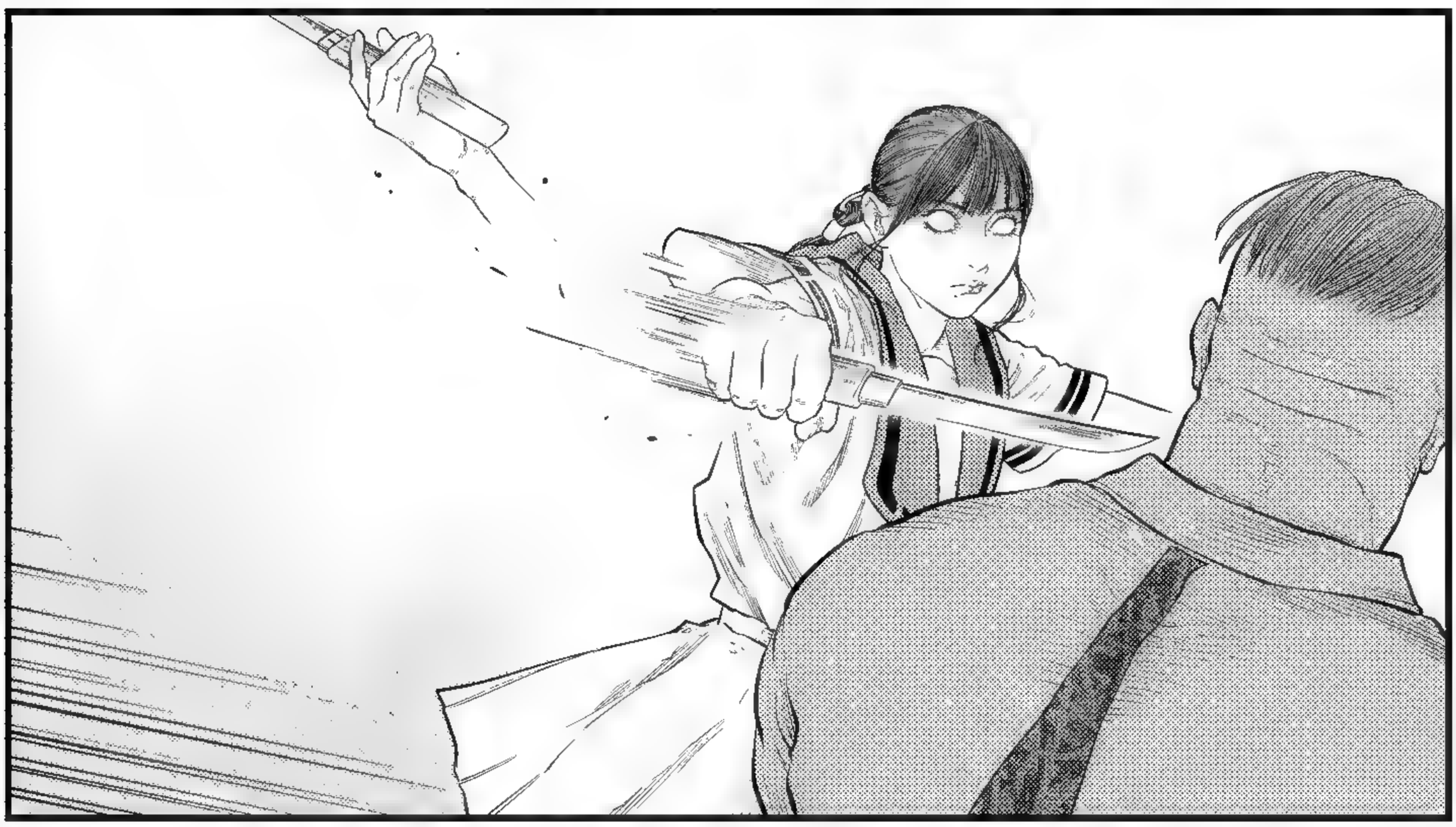


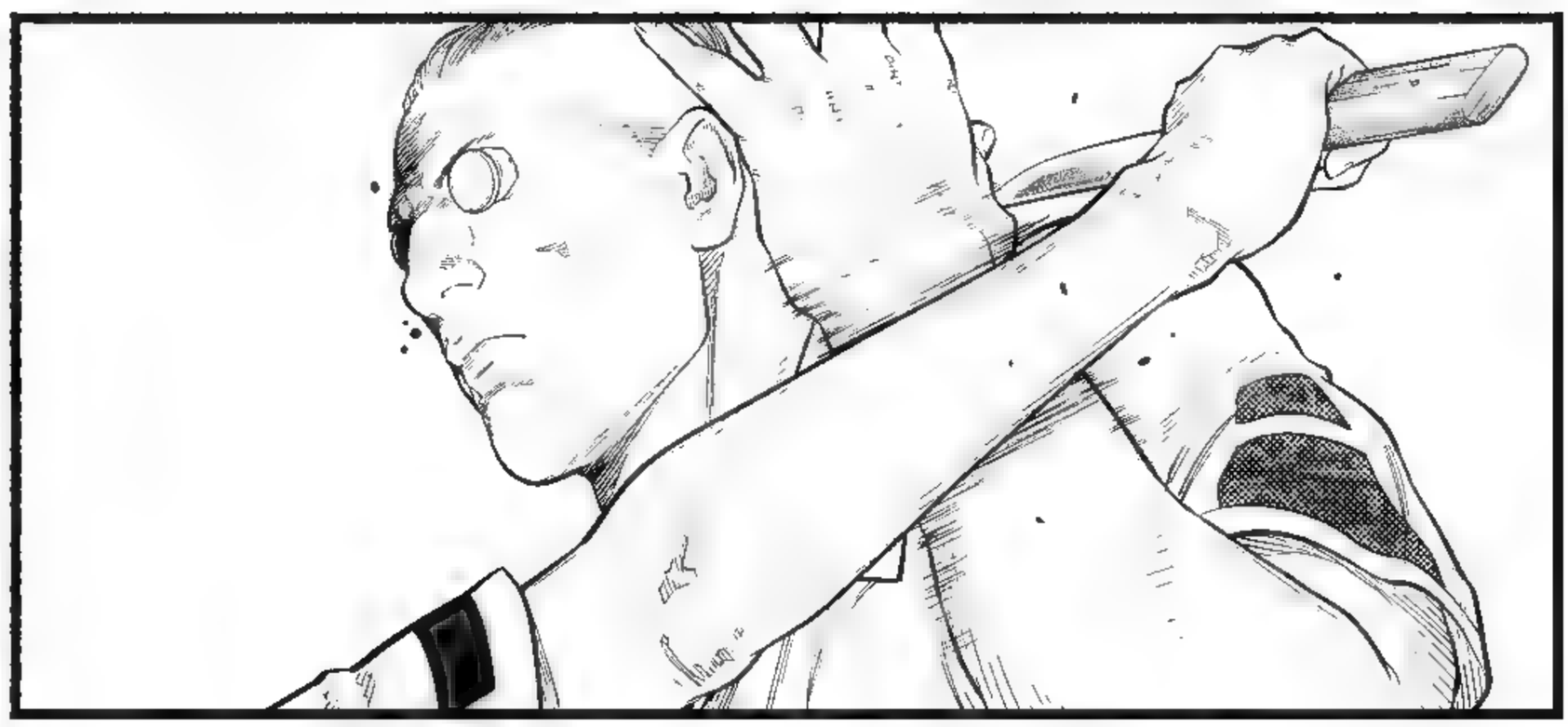


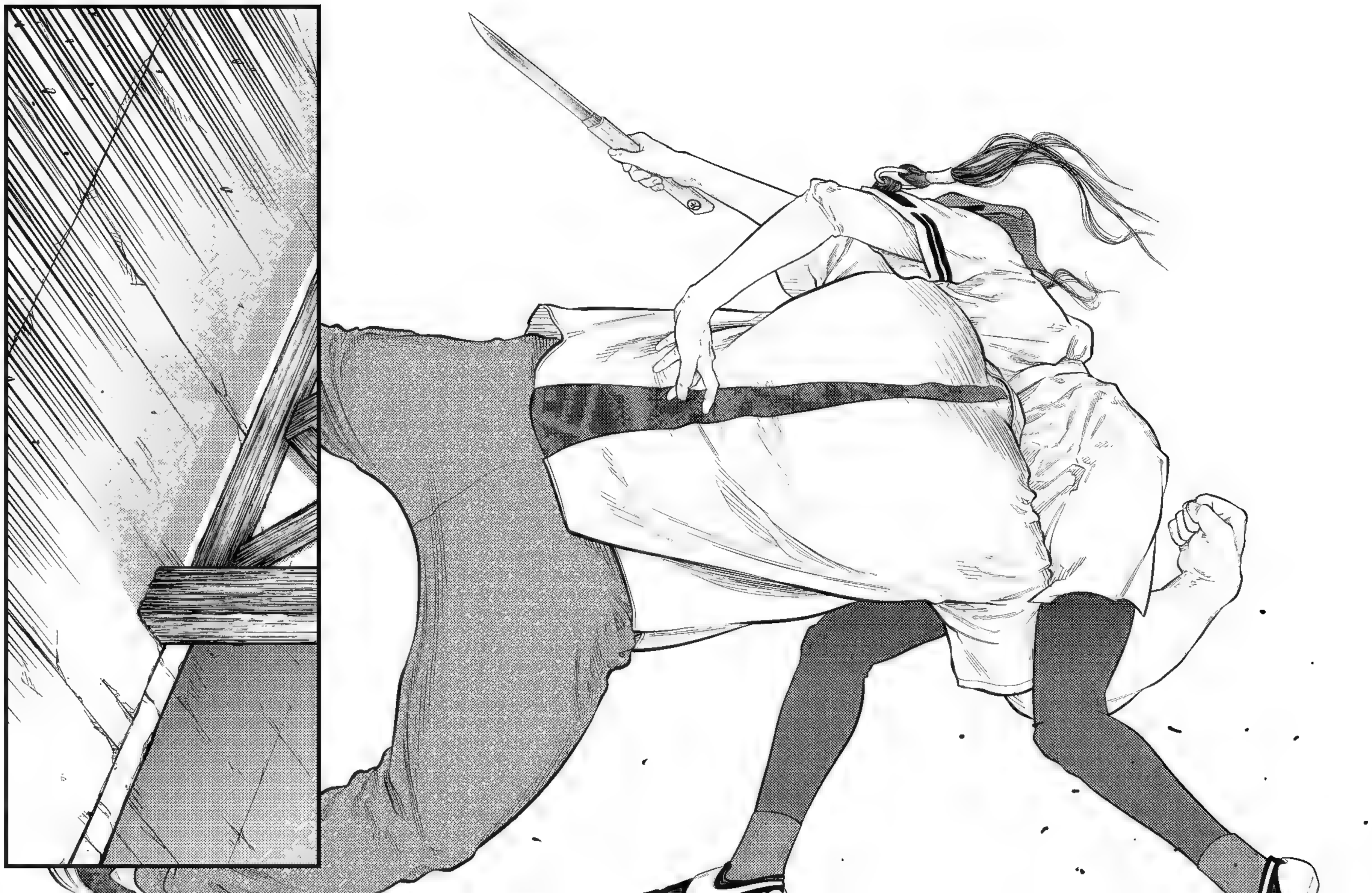


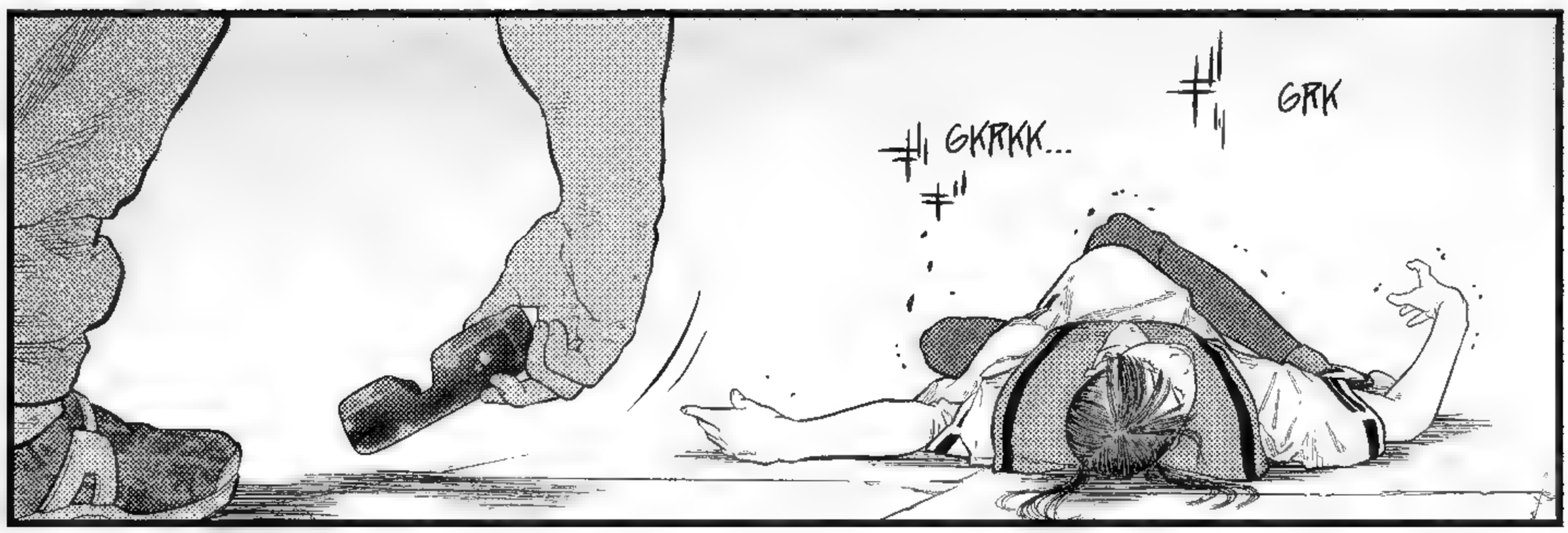


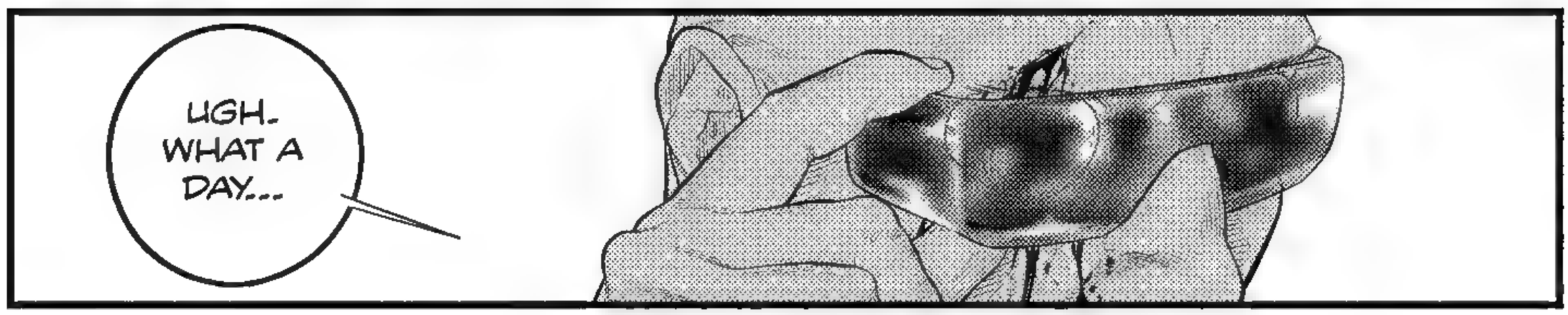









GKRKK...
GRK

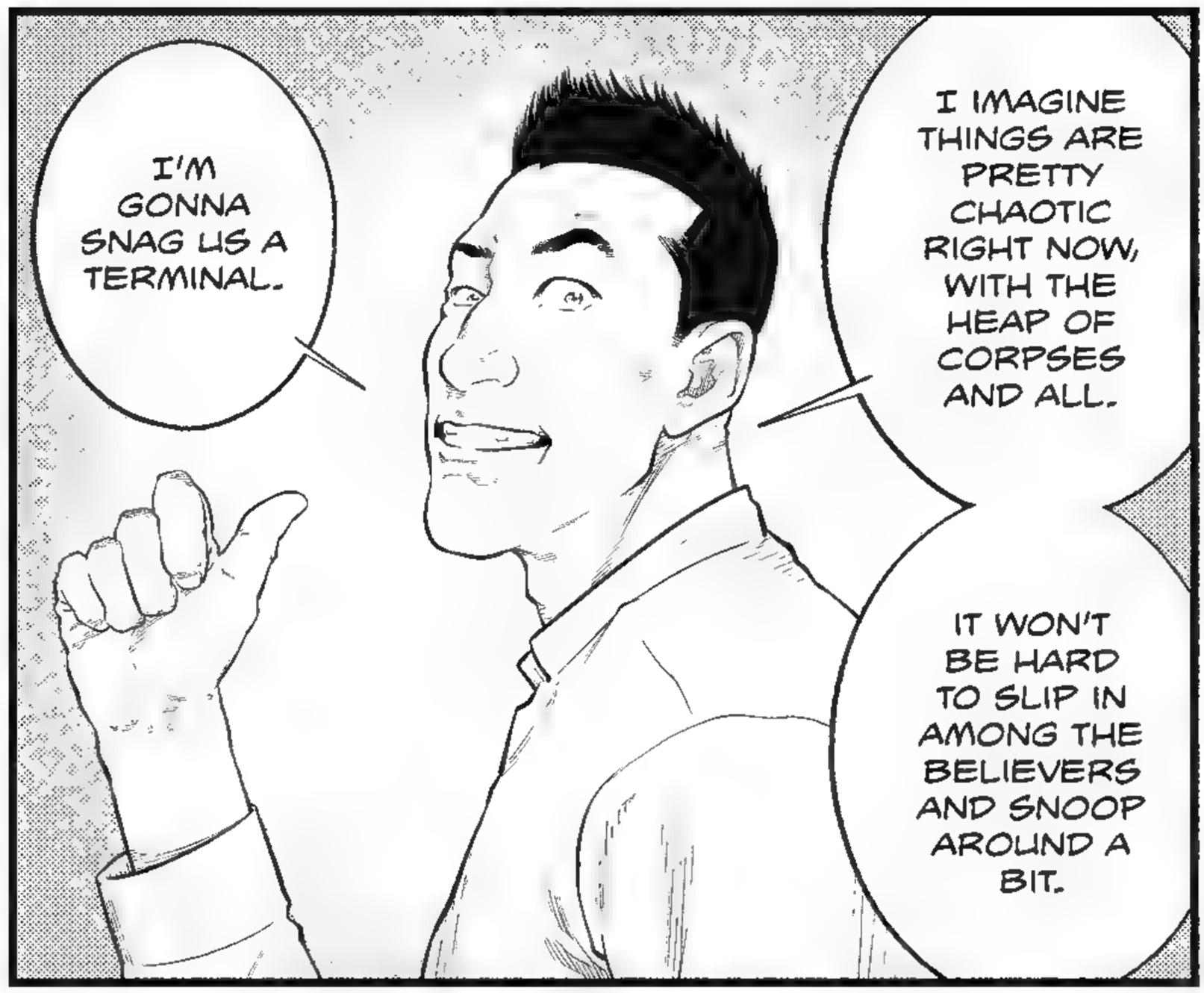

UGH. WHAT A DAY...

SO YOU THINK OSAKI'S BEEN USING ATERUI AS A COVER TO GET RID OF UNWANTED PROSTHETICS?

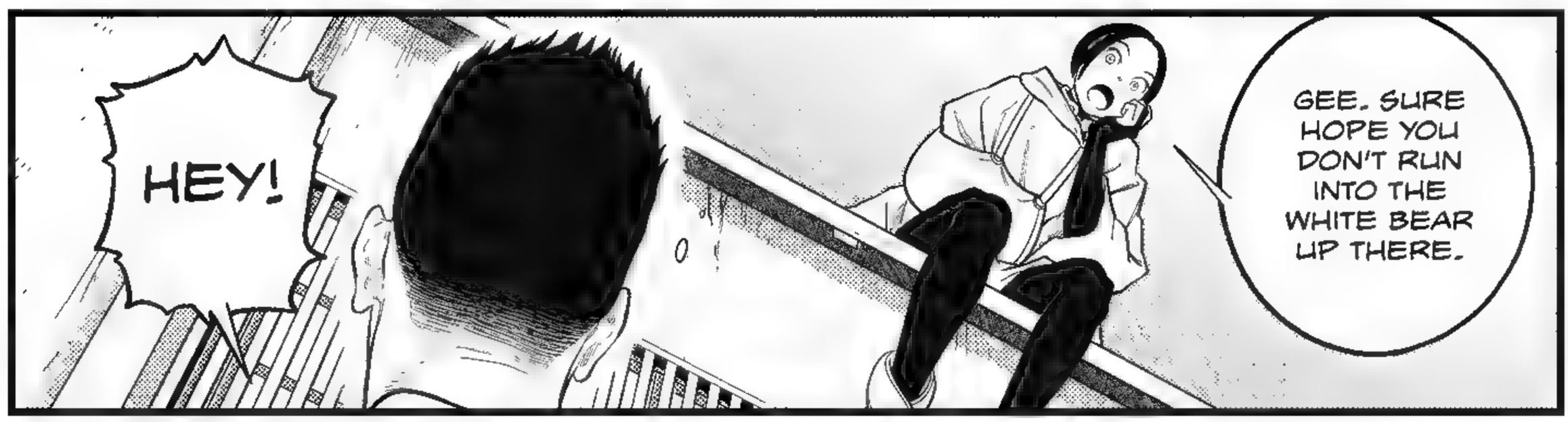
AND GUESS WHO'S A MAJOR CUSTOMER? OSAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES.

...IT'S A BUSINESS. THEY ACCEPT DISPOSAL CONTRACTS AS A WAY TO FUND THE VILLAGE.

MOST LIKELY. ATERUI INSISTS THAT DISASSEMBLY RITUAL OF THEIRS IS SOME KINDA MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR "VENERABLE PROSTHETICS," BUT IN REALITY...


I'M GONNA SNAG US A TERMINAL.
I IMAGINE THINGS ARE PRETTY CHAOTIC RIGHT NOW, WITH THE HEAP OF CORPSES AND ALL.
IT WON'T BE HARD TO SLIP IN AMONG THE BELIEVERS AND SNOOP AROUND A BIT.

...GUESS THAT'S MY CUE.
HUH...?

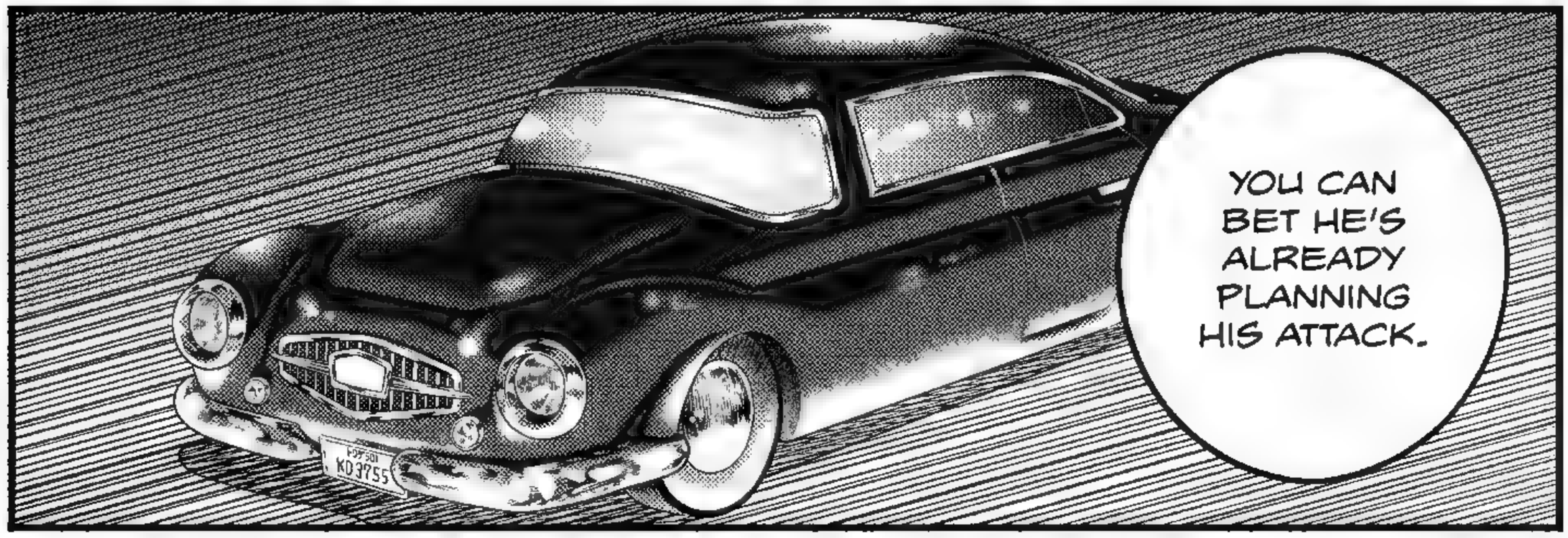

HEY!
GEE. SURE HOPE YOU DON'T RUN INTO THE WHITE BEAR UP THERE.

WHAT'S HIS NEXT MOVE?

SHE'S GOT A POINT. EVEN IF YOU DO GET YOUR HANDS ON THE TERMINAL...
...WE'VE STILL GOT OURSELVES A BEAR PROBLEM.

HE'S NOT JUST ATERUI'S GUARD DOG. THAT'S FOR SURE.

HE'S ACHING TO *HUNT*. IT'S WHAT HE LIVES FOR.



SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, OFFICIANT. IT'S A CALL FROM THE VILLAGE.

PATCH IT THROUGH, PLEASE.

TRIIIIIIL

ROAD SIGN: DOWNTOWN TOWADA

THIS IS WAKAI.

YOU SOUND TROUBLED. HAS SOMETHING HAPPENED?

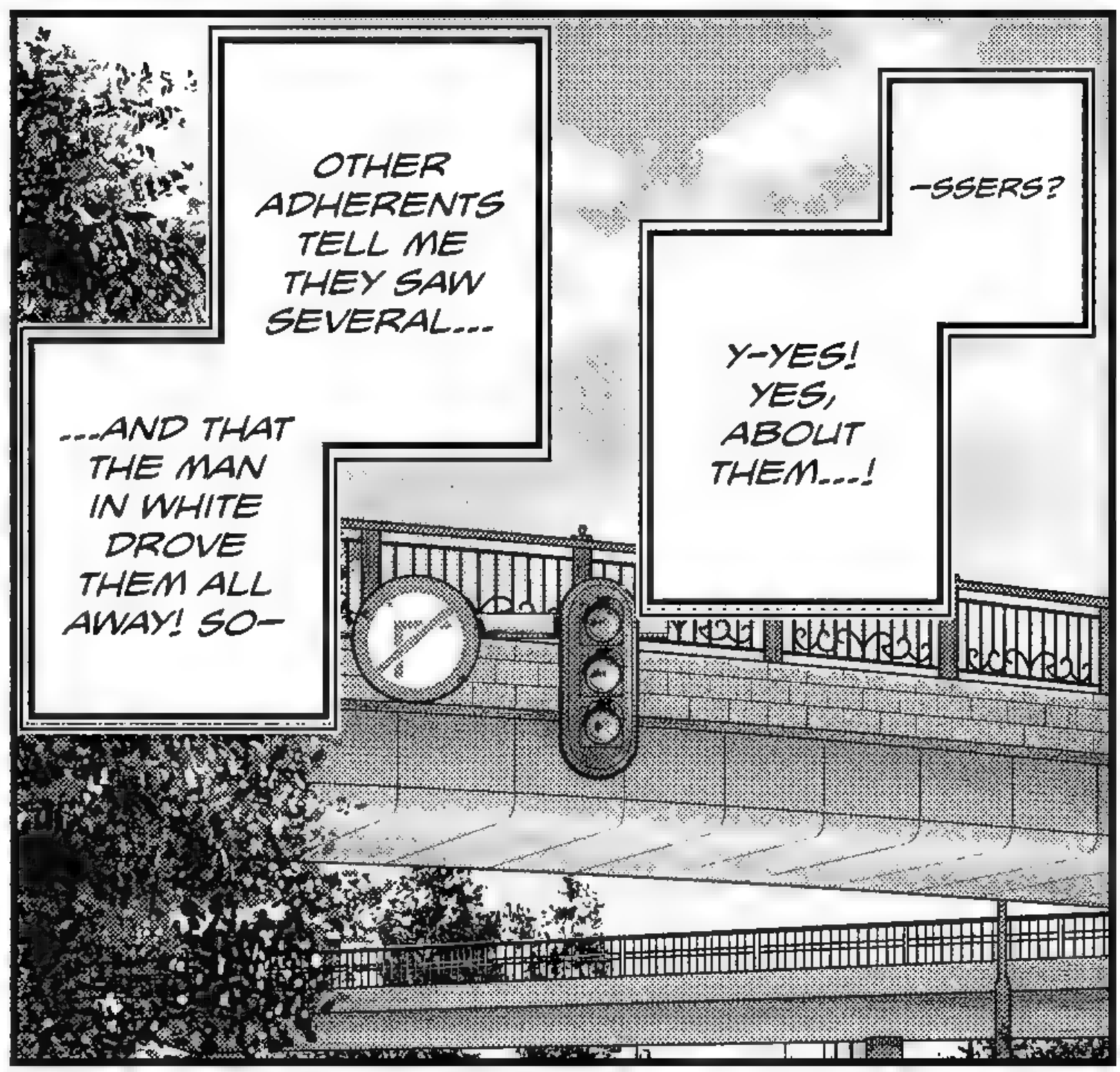
O-OFFICIANT...!

I'M SO RELIEVED TO FINALLY GET THROUGH!

EVERY-THING IS IN A STATE OF PANIC, AND—
IT'S THE VILLAGE! WE'VE BEEN ATTACKED!!
MANY OF OUR BRETHREN HAVE BEEN MURDERED ...!!

...OF THE TRESPASSERS?
AND WHAT...

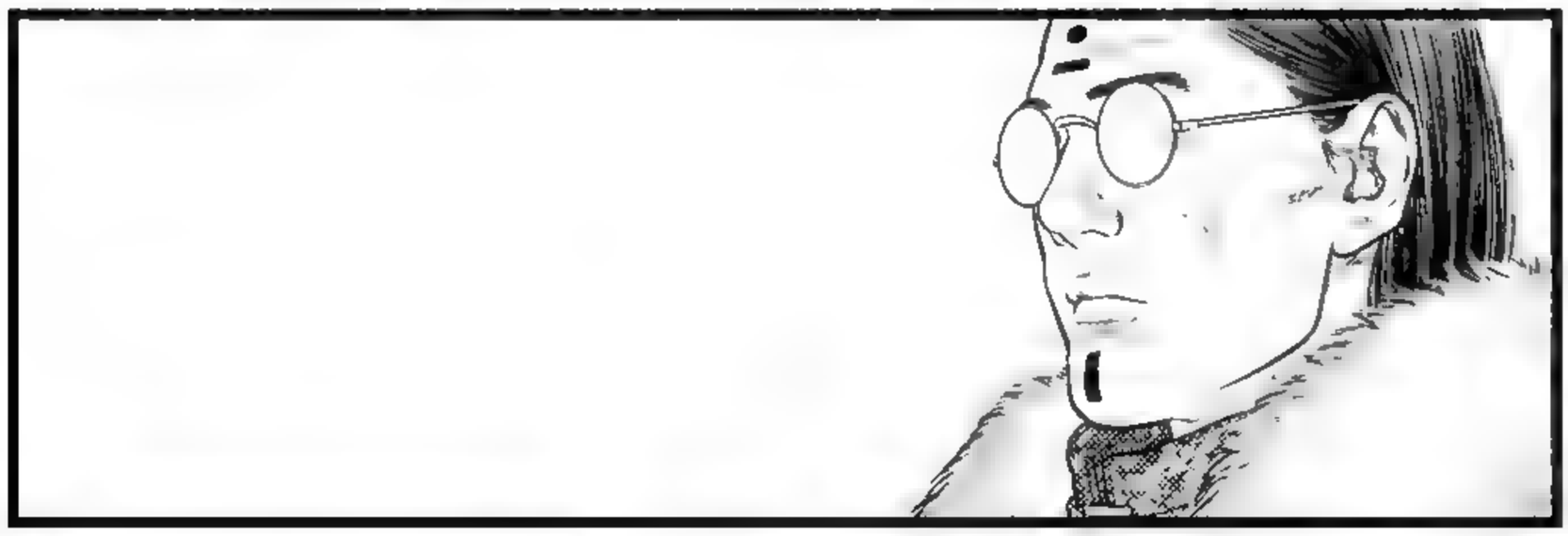
I SEE. THE STATEMENT TO THE POLICE WILL HAVE TO WAIT. I SHALL HEAD BACK IMMEDIATELY.

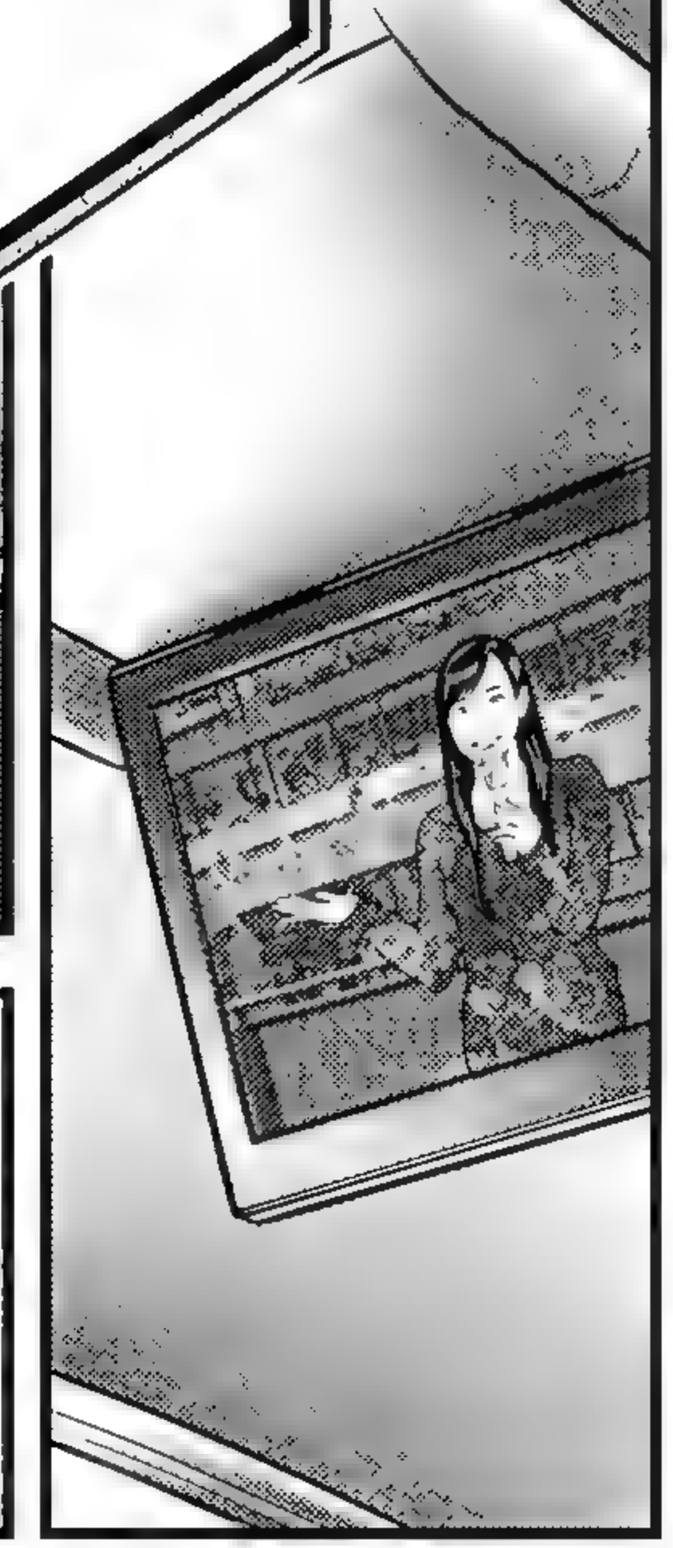

OTHER ADHERENTS TELL ME THEY SAW SEVERAL...
...AND THAT THE MAN IN WHITE DROVE THEM ALL AWAY! SO—
—SSERS?
Y-YES! YES, ABOUT THEM...!

...WHERE OVER THE COMING DAYS...

...COUNCILOR SHINRA MIKOMOTO IS EXPECTED TO DELIVER SEVERAL ADDRESSES AS PART OF HER CAMPAIGN FOR MAYOR.

I'M STANDING IN FRONT OF NEW PORT CITY PLAZA, IN NIIHAMA PREFECTURE...





...YOU HAVE OVERSTEPPED YOUR BOUNDS. THE HARMONY BETWEEN US IS GONE.

AH, OSAKI. IN SENDING YOUR AGENTS OF DEATH INTO THE VILLAGE...

...SHALL HAVE TO SERVE AS OUR SACRIFICIAL LAMB.

AND NOW, YOUR BELOVED PRINCESS...

YES, MY DEAR. YOU WILL PERISH, THAT ATERUI PERSISTS ETERNAL.

ONCE AGAIN, THE TIME TO HUNT IS AT HAND.

GO, MY WHITE BEAR.

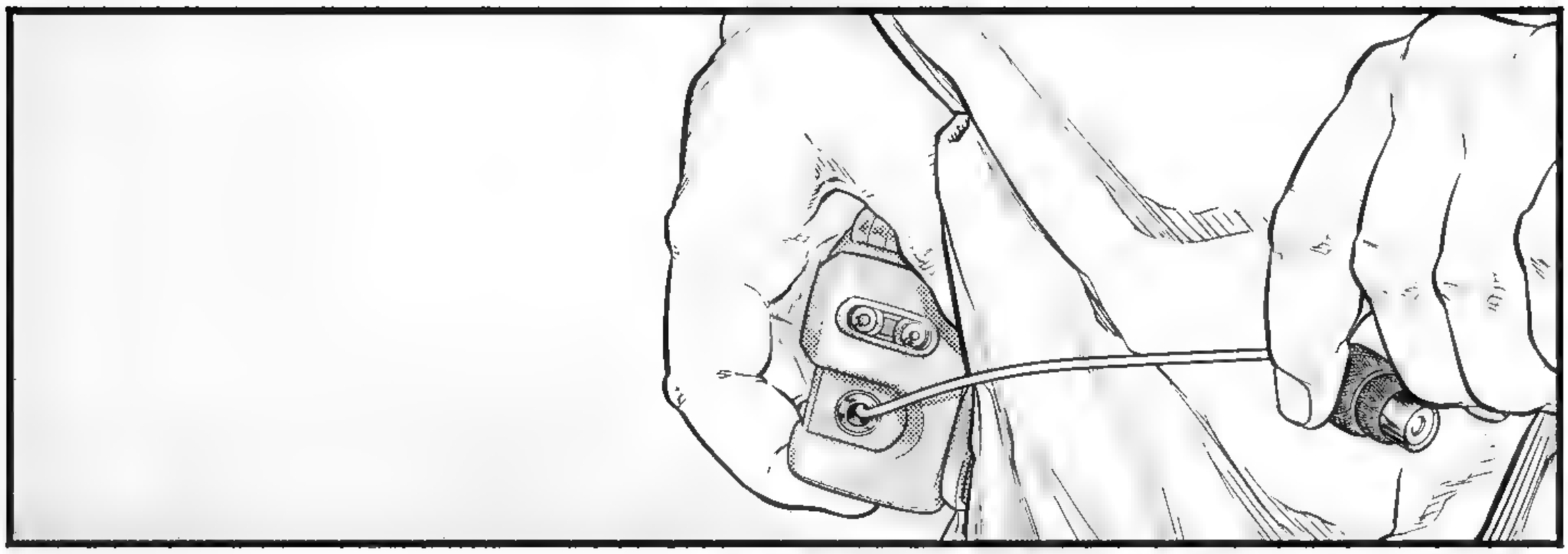
THE GHOST IN THE SHELL

攻殻機動隊

THE HUMAN ALGORITHM

11

ULTERIOR MOTIVE



BARRIER'S INTACT. NO SIGN OF INTRUSION.
WAS IT AN INTERNAL MALFUNCTION?

I HOPE ISHIKAWA'S NOT HURT.
DAMMIT...

HUMAN THEORY
ANONYMOUS CITY

* IN "URASHIMA TARO," THE EPONYMOUS HERO RIDES A TURTLE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA, WHERE HE BEFRIENDS THE PRINCESS OF THE DRAGON PALACE. HE RETURNS AFTER A BRIEF STAY, ONLY TO FIND THAT ON LAND, HUNDREDS OF YEARS HAVE PASSED. DISTRAUGHT, HE OPENS A FORBIDDEN JEWELED BOX ENTRUSTED TO HIM BY THE PRINCESS AND INSTANTLY AGES INTO AN OLD MAN.

HMPH. IMAGINE THAT.

NOW WE KNOW HOW THE ATTACK ON THE COUN-CILOR WAS EXECUTED.

GUESS EVEN AZUMA'S USEFUL ONCE IN A WHILE.

...IN OSAKI PROS-THETICS.

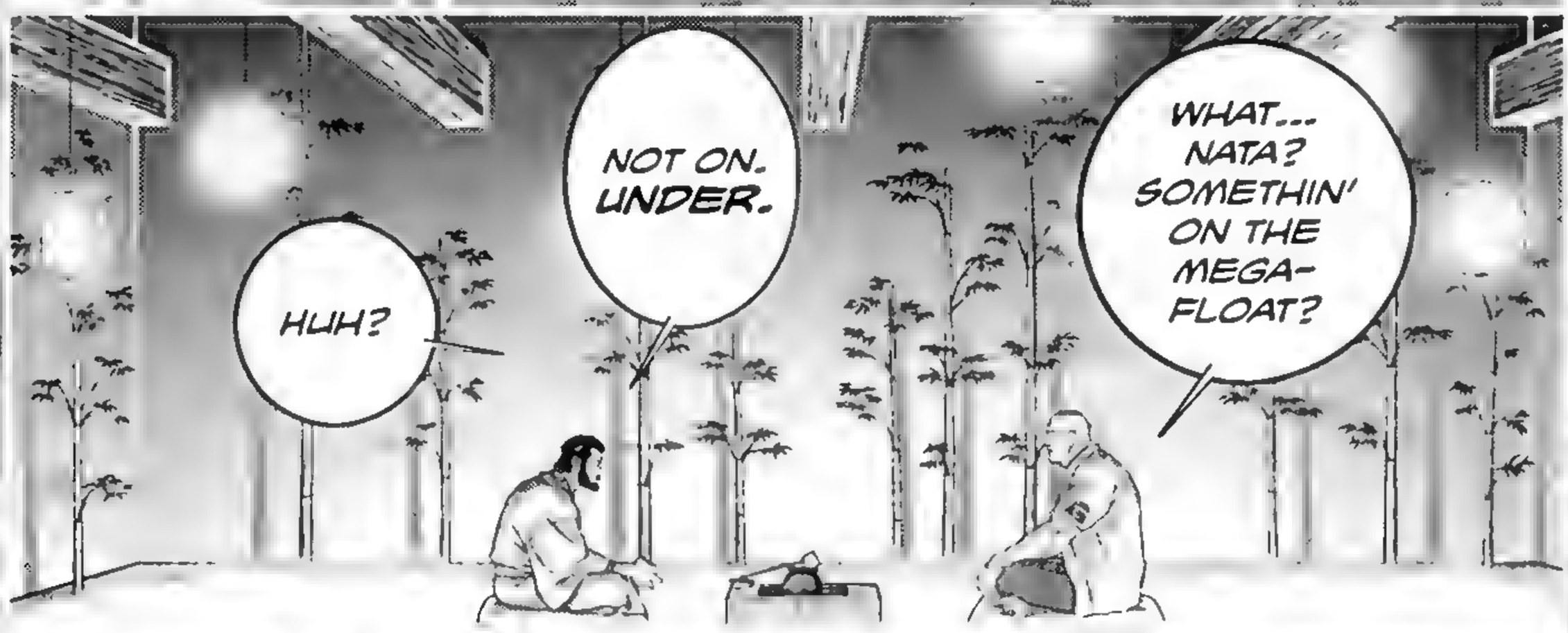
SEIZED FROM THE INSIDE. AND ALL BECAUSE OF SOME STANDARD-ISSUE REMOTE MAINTENANCE SYSTEM...

JUST MY LUCK SHE TURNED OUT TO BE AN OSAKI MODEL.

I WAS AS METICULOUS AS EVER WHEN CLEANING OUT HER SYSTEMS BEFORE USE.

IN THAT CASE, OUR BEST BET IS TO FOCUS ON WHAT THE QING-SHE ARE AFTER.

YEAH, WELL, ONCE MY HANDS WERE FREE, I HOPPED BACK ON THE CAMERAS.
LITTLE HASHIKAMI WAS LONG GONE.


NOT ON. UNDER.
HUH?
WHAT... NATA? SOMETHIN' ON THE MEGA-FLOAT?

AH, GEEZ. ENOUGH WITH THE URASHIMA TARO STUFF.

A "JEWELED BOX" RESTING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

...BUT I'VE HEARD STORIES. BACK IN THE WAR, ONE OF JAPAN'S MILITARY CARGO SHIPS SANK NEARBY. SOMETHING VALUABLE WAS ON BOARD.

I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THIS BURIED TREASURE IS YET...

GETTING NEAR THE GOODS WON'T BE EASY.

NO DOUBT. BOTH OF 'EM HAVE BEEN KEEPING A CLOSE EYE ON THE WATER.

SOUNDS LIKE A TREAT.

WONDERFUL. SO THAT'S WHY THE YAMBARU AND QINGSHE ARE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS?

THAT SUNKEN SHIP? IT WAS NUCLEAR.

OH, BUT GET READY. THERE'S A BIGGER TREAT.

THE SURROUNDING WATERS ARE CONTAMINATED WITH A WHOLE HOST OF RADIOACTIVE POLLUTANTS.

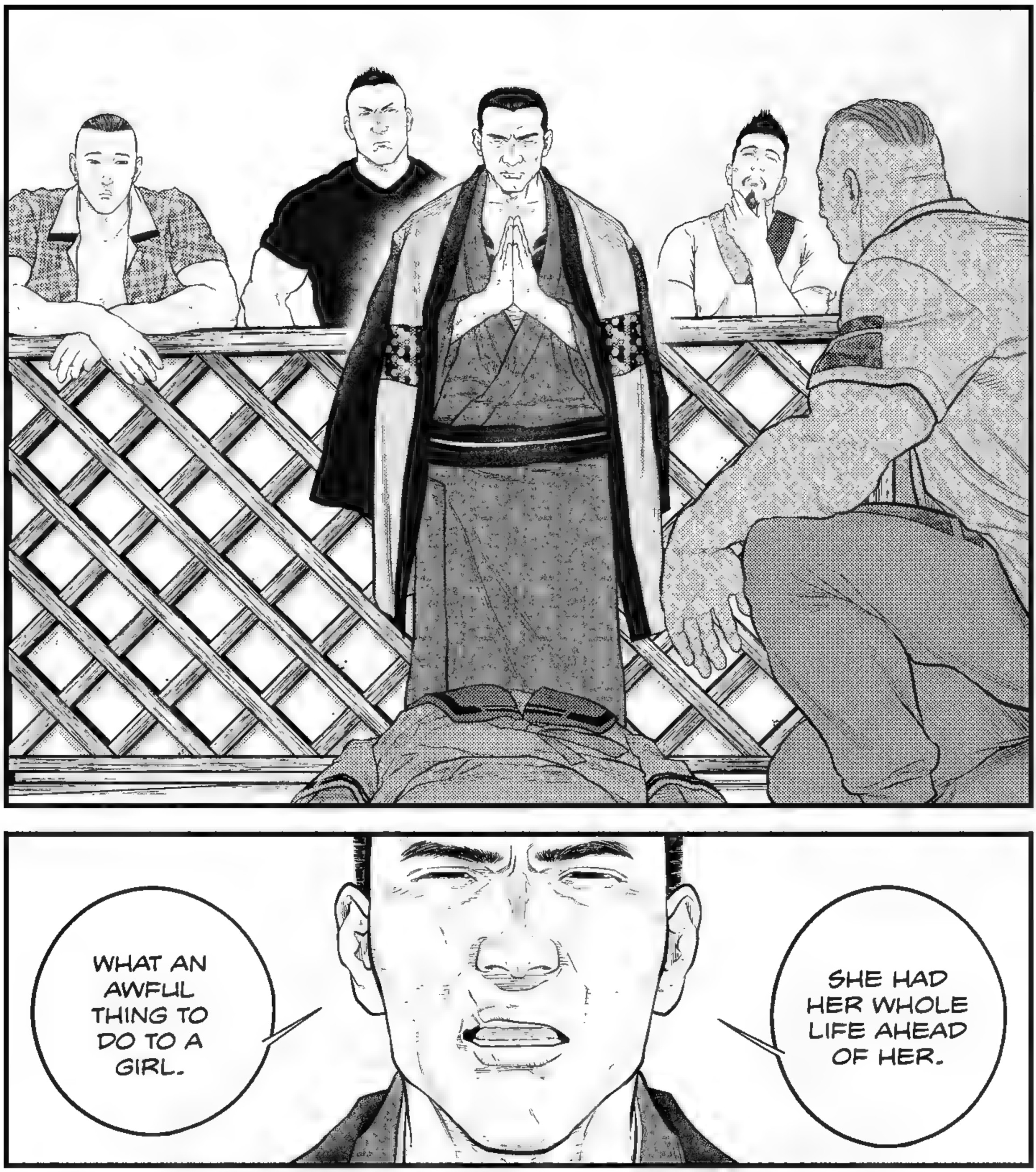
BUT IF IT'S JUST US, EVEN SECURING A PROPERLY SHIELDED DIVING SUIT WILL BE A TALL ORDER.

I'M WORKING ON A PLAN.

THEN HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO GET DOWN THERE?

I'M SIGNING OUT.

COMPANY.


WHAT AN AWFUL THING TO DO TO A GIRL.
SHE HAD HER WHOLE LIFE AHEAD OF HER.

!
KRNCH
I'VE BEEN HEARING A LOT ABOUT YOU FROM MY BOYS.
THEY SAY YOU SHOWED REAL TALENT AT THE JOB CENTER.

NO. IT'S...!
I CAN EX-PLAIN!

I WAS THINKING MAYBE TALENT LIKE THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE.

HUH?

REST ASSURED, YAMBARU INDUSTRIES IS PREPARED...

...TO PROVIDE EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE...

...TO ENSURE YOUR SAFE ARRIVAL AT A CERTAIN *DRAGON PALACE.*

...

PSSH.

EVERY ASSISTANCE, HUH? SO WHERE'S THE TURTLE?

WE'RE GETTIN' CLOSE. MAYBE YOU OUGHTA START PUTTIN' ON YOUR—

FELLA!

AND THE RE-BREATHER'S GOT BUILT-IN PROPULSION. YOU'LL SWIM LIKE A FISH!

WHY THE CONCERN? THAT'S LEVEL A HAZMAT GEAR!

HOLD ON.

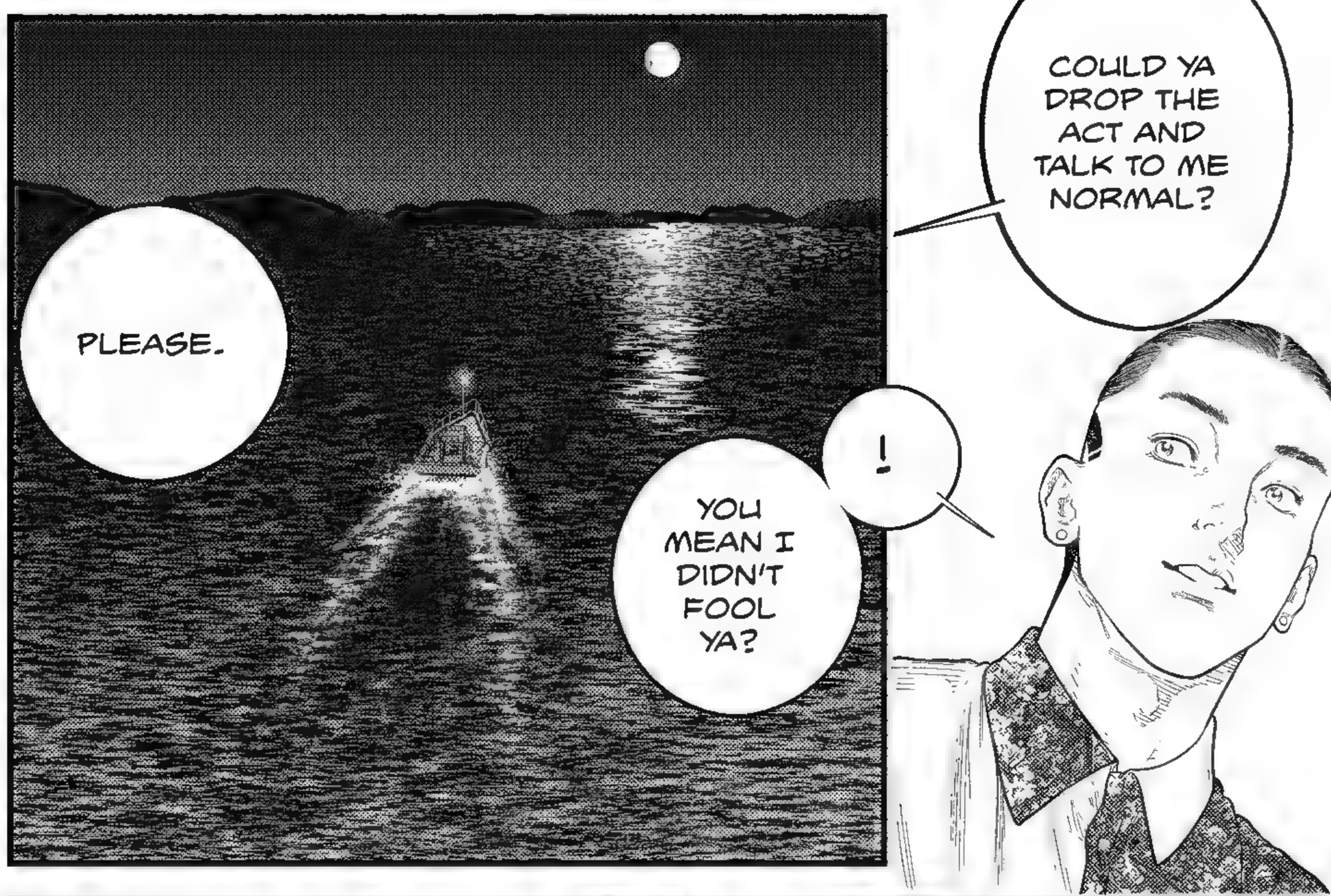
HOW DO I KNOW THIS STUFF WORKS?

...

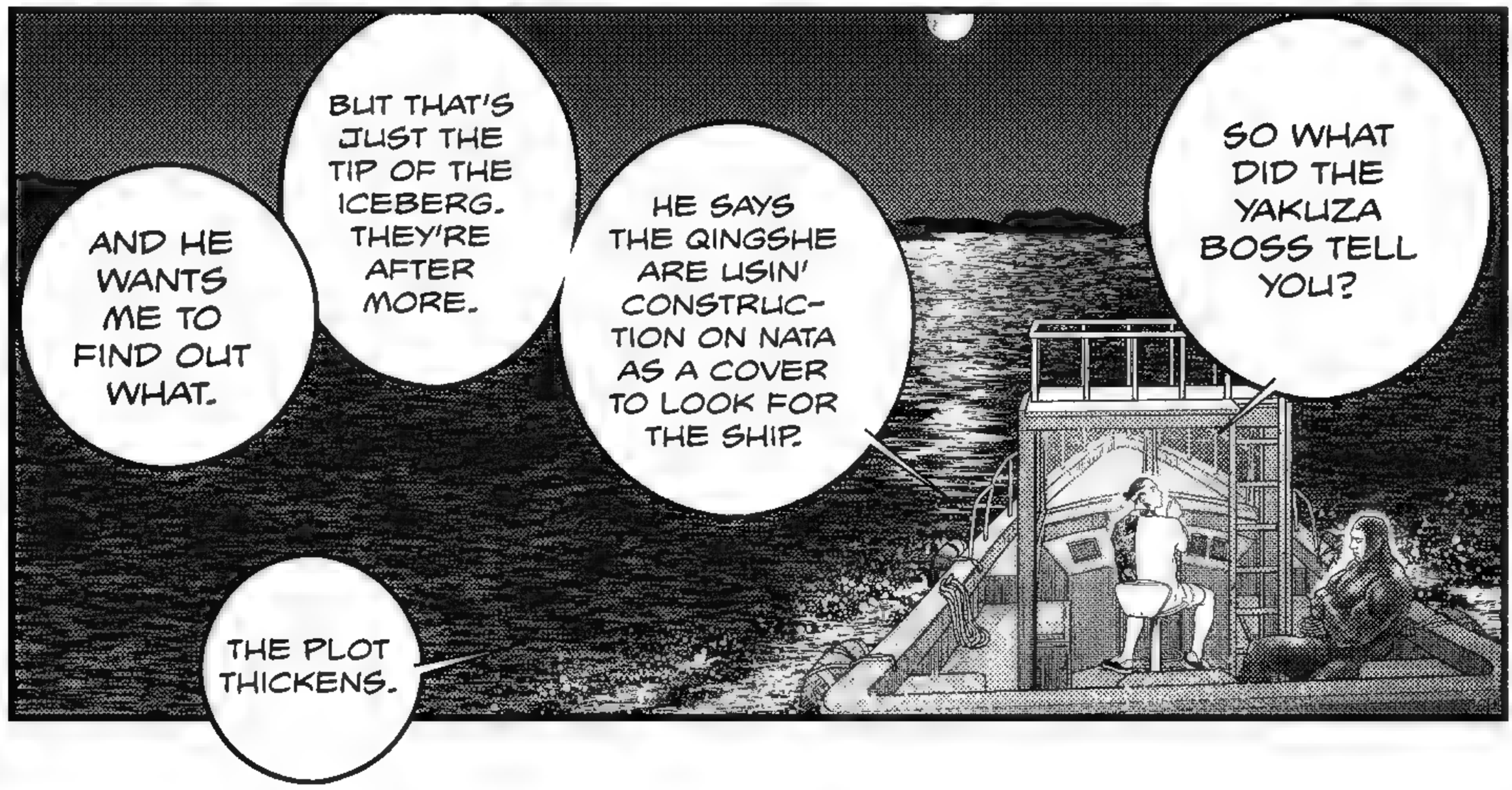
HAHA! RELAX, MR. URASHIMA. YOU WORRY TOO MUCH!

I'D RATHER NOT GET *STUCK* DOWN THERE, THANKS.

I'M TALKIN' ABOUT THE FLOATERS!


PLEASE.
YOU MEAN I DIDN'T FOOL YA?
!
COULD YA DROP THE ACT AND TALK TO ME NORMAL?

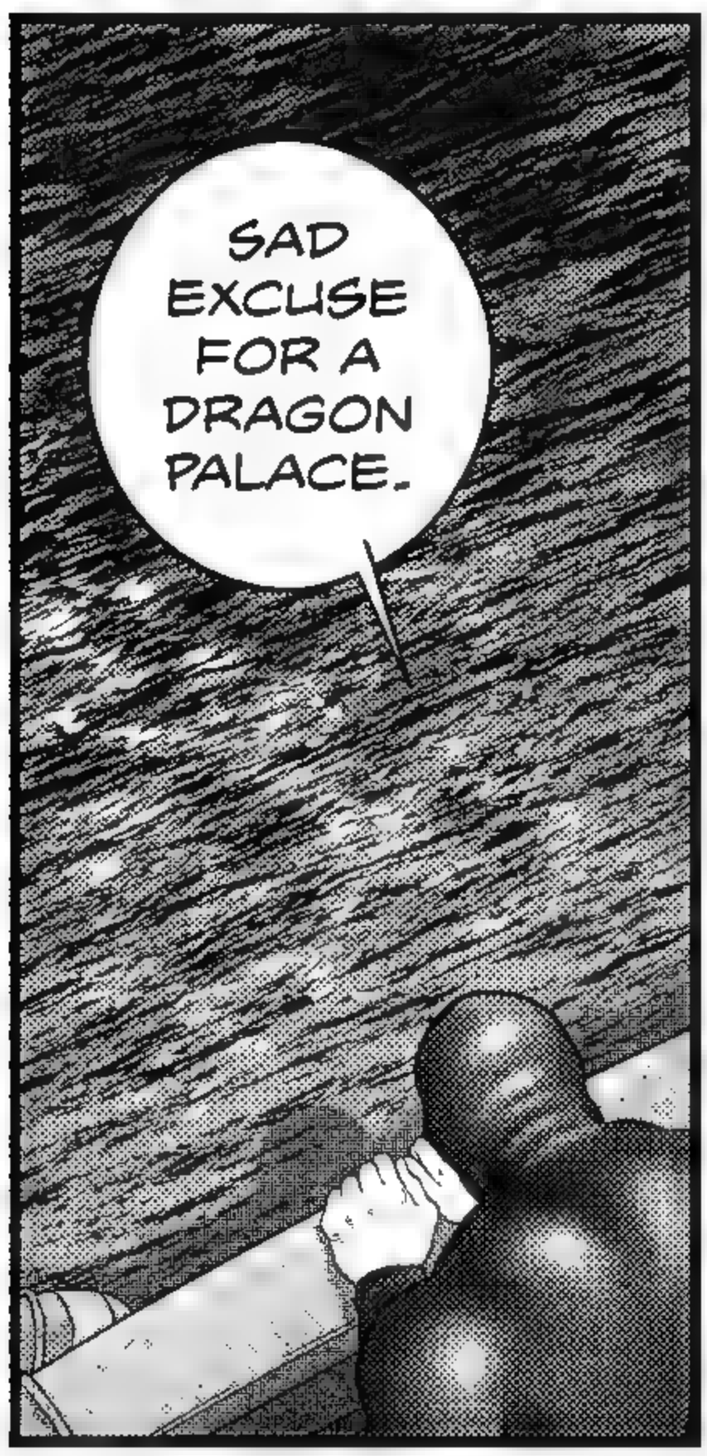
YEAH, WE DID THAT ALREADY.
WHAT'S UP?

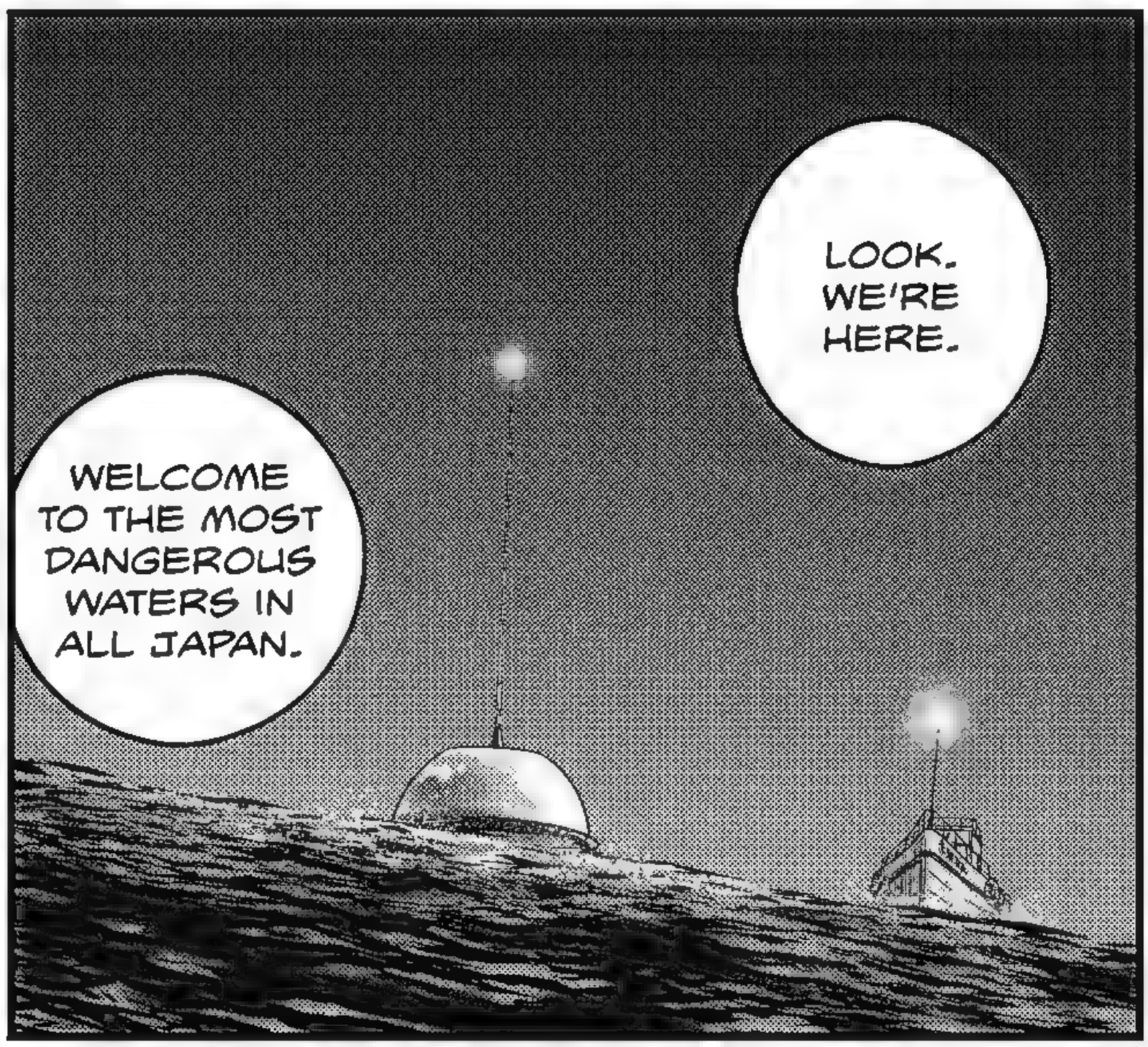

AND HE WANTS ME TO FIND OUT WHAT.
BUT THAT'S JUST THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG. THEY'RE AFTER MORE.
HE SAYS THE QINGSHE ARE USIN' CONSTRUCTION ON NATA AS A COVER TO LOOK FOR THE SHIP.
SO WHAT DID THE YAKUZA BOSS TELL YOU?
THE PLOT THICKENS.

NOT TO MENTION, IT CAUGHT THE SHE-APE'S EYE.
GUESS YOU BETTER SOLVE US A RIDDLE WHILE YOU'RE DOWN THERE.

I FIGURE IF IT'S ENOUGH TO KEEP THE QINGSHE ROOTIN' AROUND IN JAPANESE WATERS, IT'S GOTTA BE BIG.

EASY FOR YOU TO SAY.
TSK!


SAD EXCUSE FOR A DRAGON PALACE.


LOOK. WE'RE HERE.
WELCOME TO THE MOST DANGEROUS WATERS IN ALL JAPAN.

IF YOU'RE REALLY FOND OF THAT COMPLEXION OF YOURS, KEEP AN EYE ON THE CLOCK.

...AND YOU'LL BE TOO FAR GONE FOR DECONTAMI-NATION.

DON'T FORGET. THE RADIATION HERE'S SO INTENSE, BARE SKIN ISN'T AN OPTION. EVEN WITH THE SUIT, SPEND MORE THAN THREE HOURS...

PSHHH

DEEP-SEA DIVING'S A HELL OF A HOBBY FOR A CYBORG.

THE *REAL* ONE.

KSPLOSH

THE CODE IS THE ADDRESS FOR TOGUSA'S WIFE.

I'LL BE WATCHING THE SONAR IF YOU RUN INTO TROUBLE.

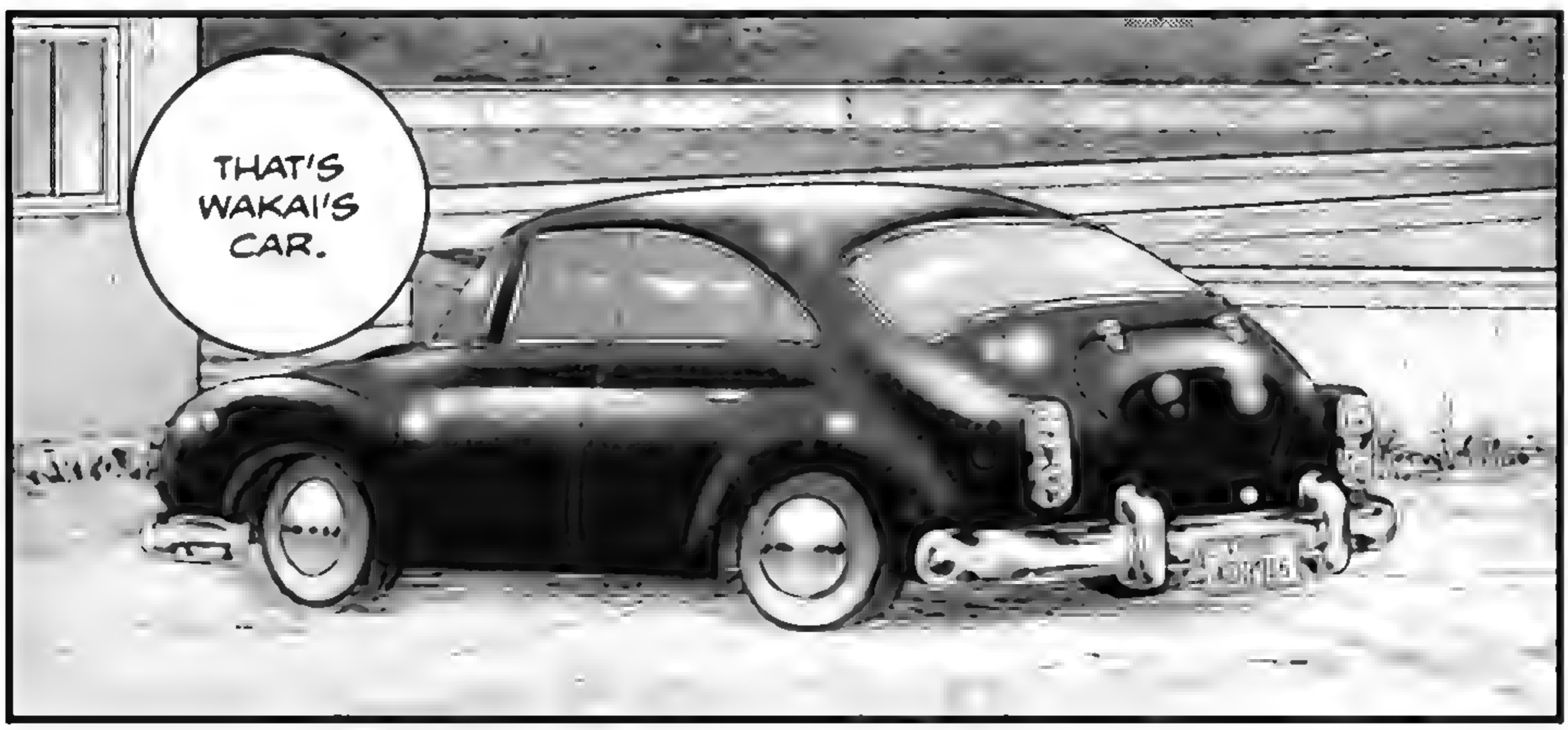
WHICH WIFE?

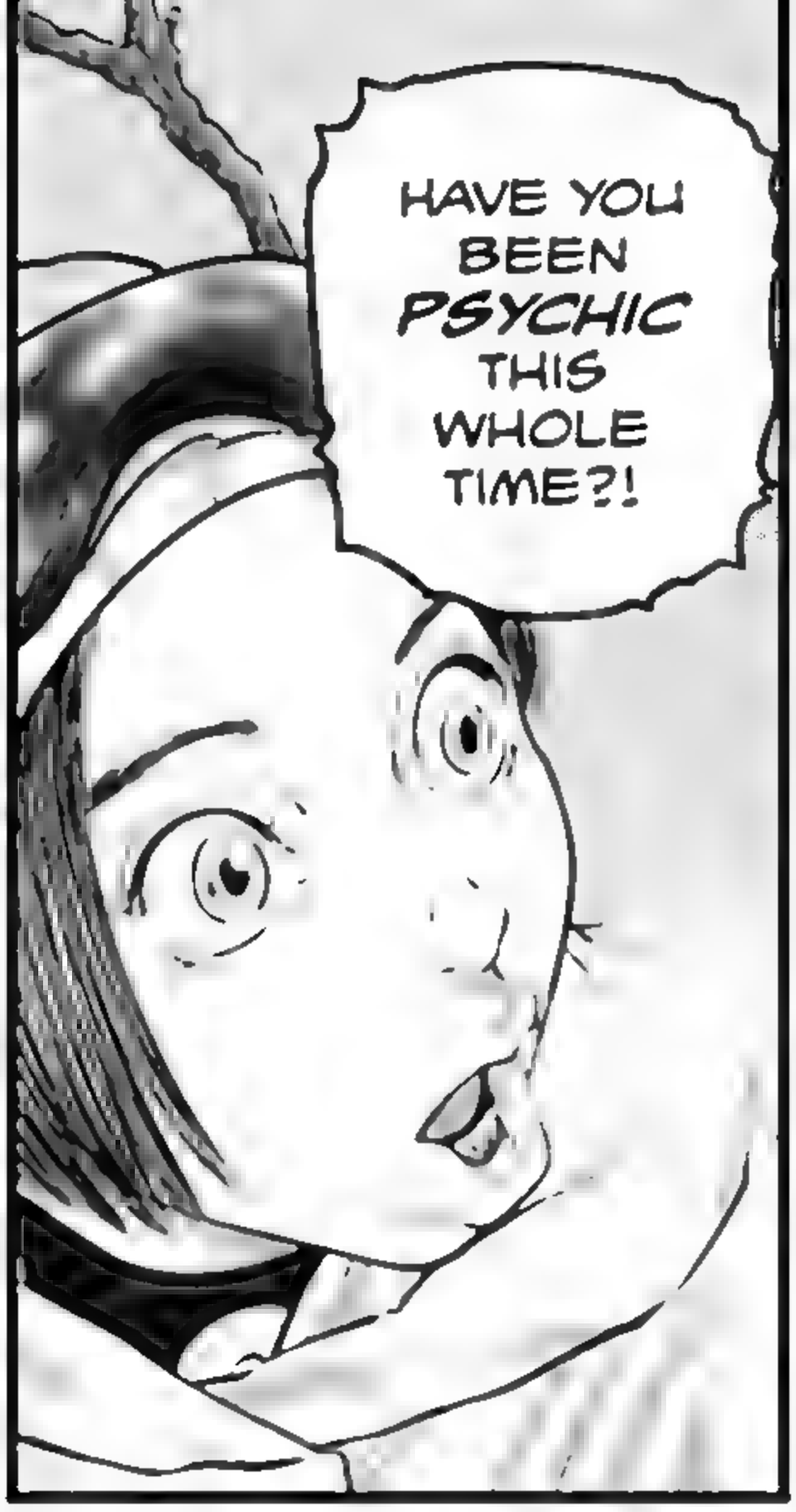
?!
BEEEEEP

0.64
HOW'S A PLACE GET THIS BAD?

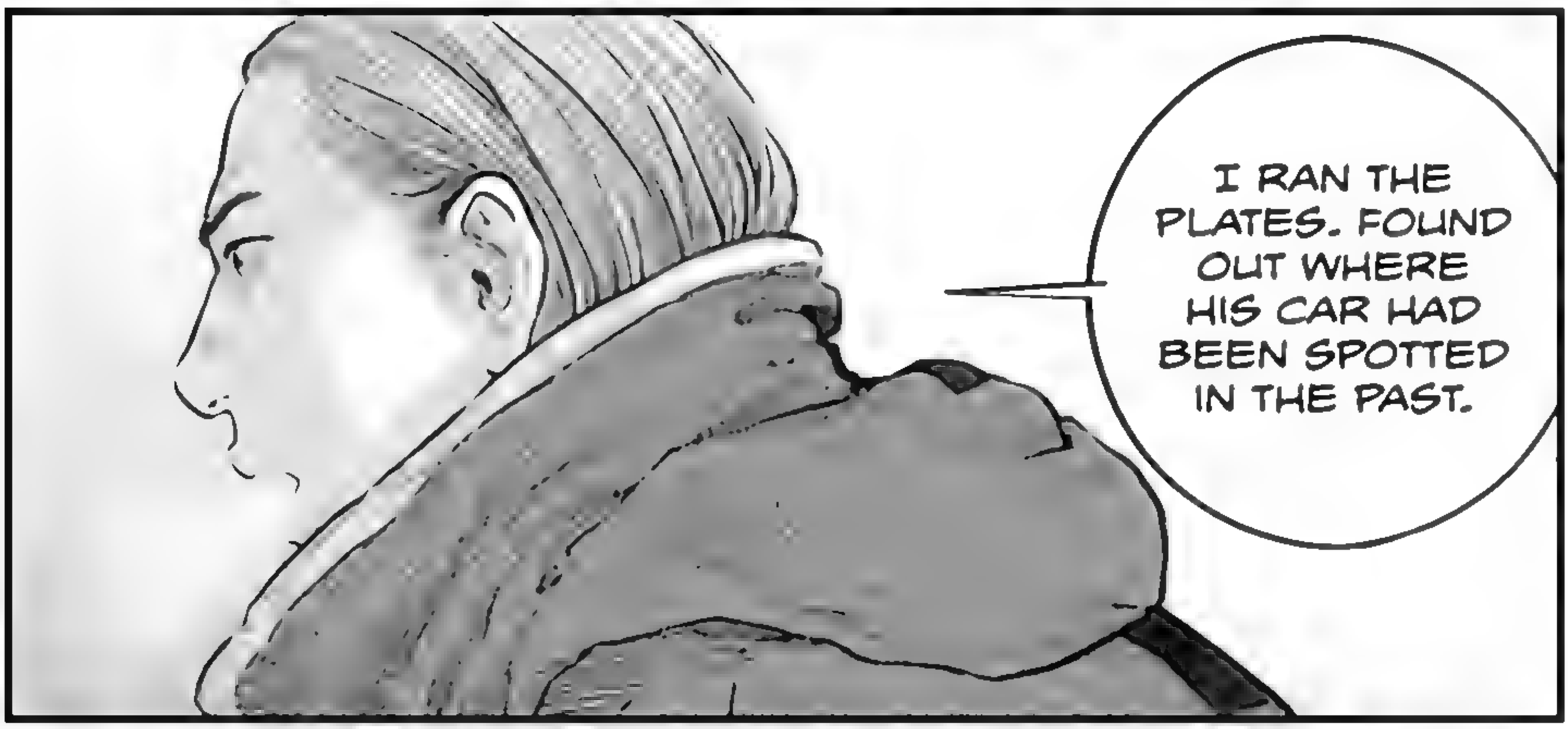
BEEEEEP
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME. I'M NOT EVEN A HUNDRED METERS DOWN.

SIGN: KITA-AKASATO DAM CONTROL STATION

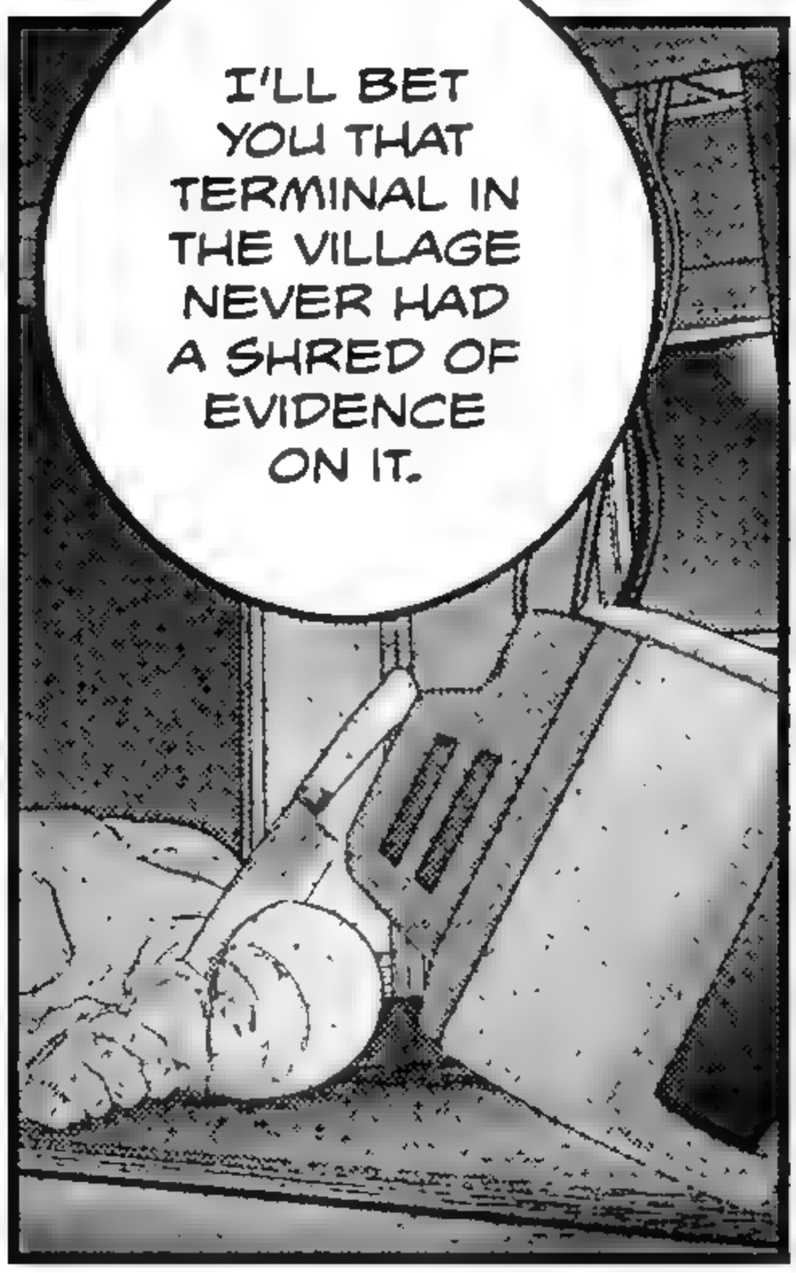

THAT'S WAKAI'S CAR.

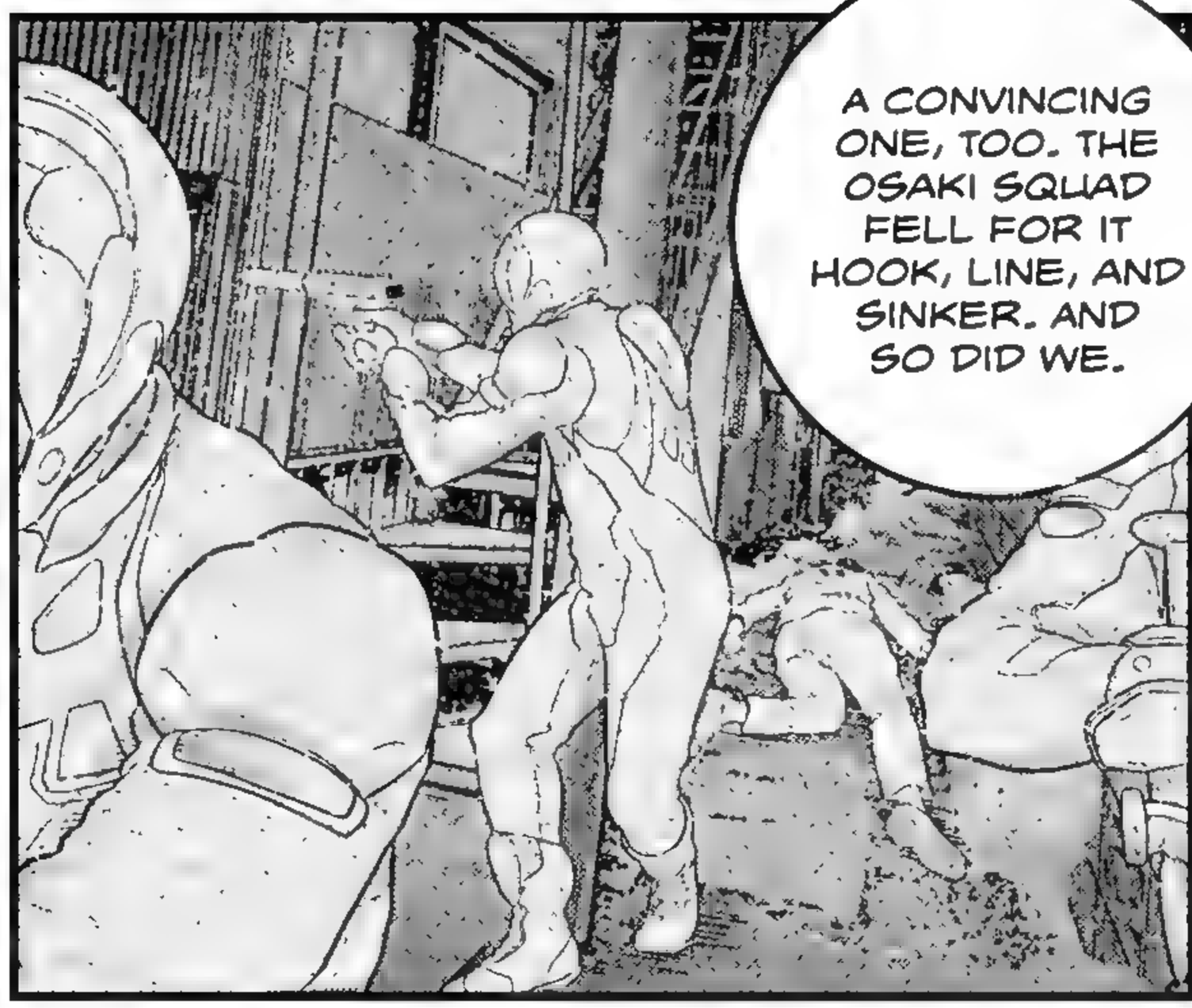

HAVE YOU BEEN PSYCHIC THIS WHOLE TIME?!

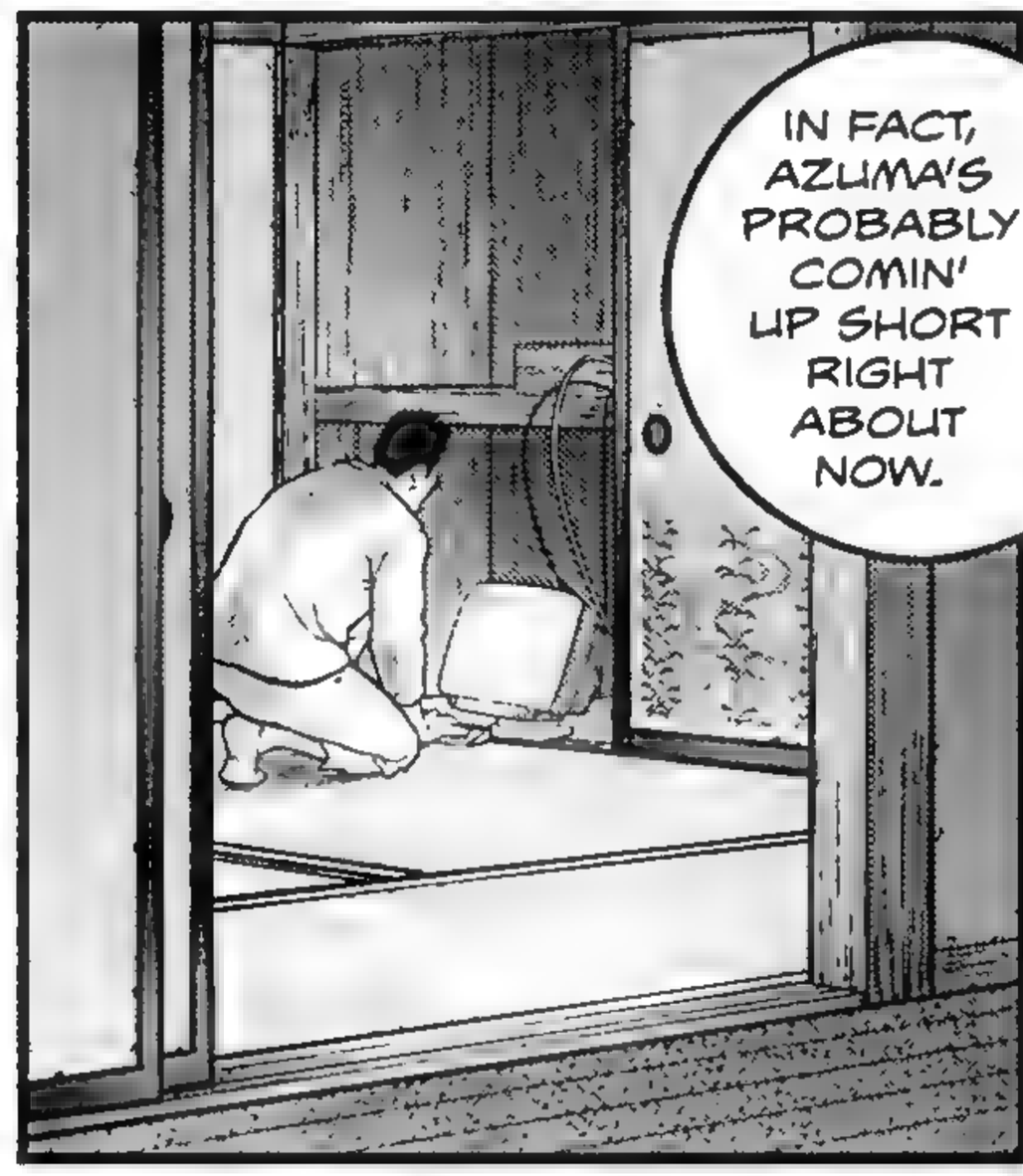
IT'S JUST LIKE YOU SAID! HE'S REALLY HERE!
WHOA!


I RAN THE PLATES. FOUND OUT WHERE HIS CAR HAD BEEN SPOTTED IN THE PAST.

HUH? ARE THEY HAVING A FESTIVAL?
ATERUI'S JUST THERE FOR THE PARADE.
OH. I STILL DON'T GET WHY HE DIDN'T GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE, THOUGH.
I MEAN IT'S THE FACE OF THE OPERATION.


I'LL BET YOU THAT TERMINAL IN THE VILLAGE NEVER HAD A SHRED OF EVIDENCE ON IT.

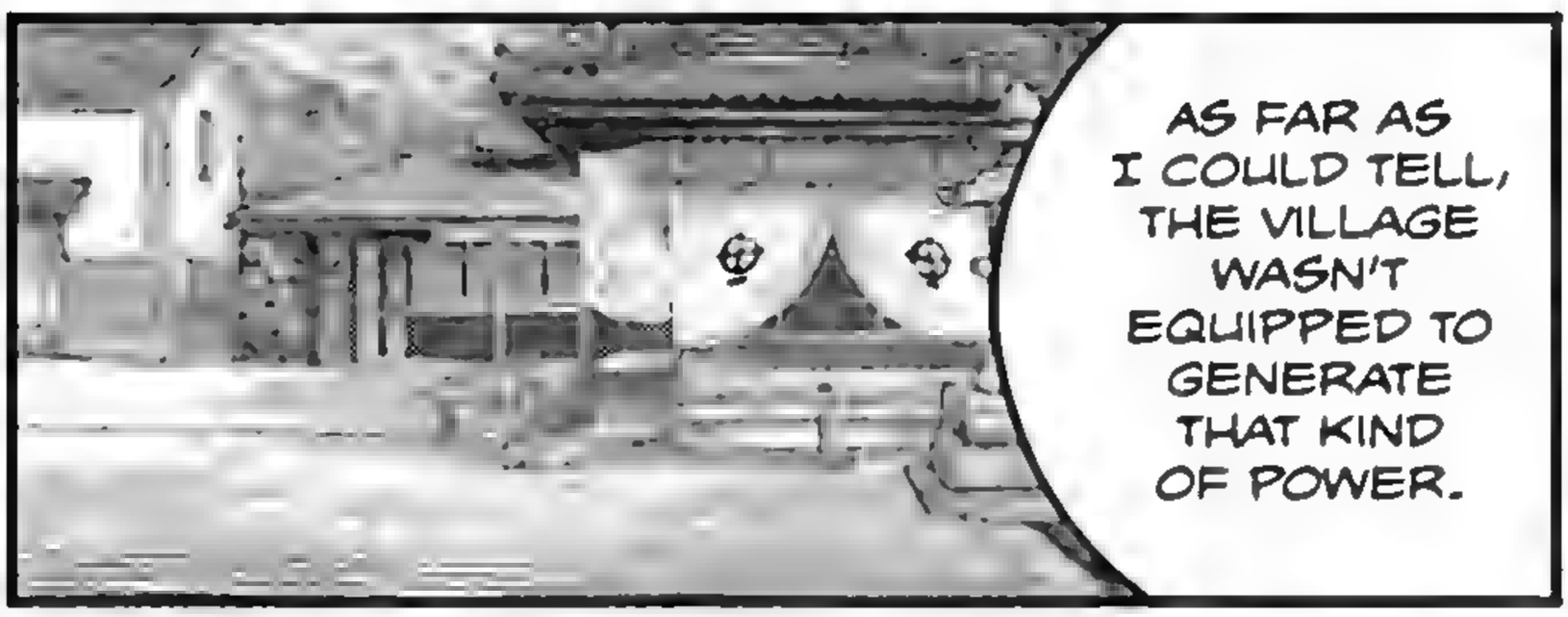

A CONVINCING ONE, TOO. THE OSAKI SQUAD FELL FOR IT HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER. AND SO DID WE.

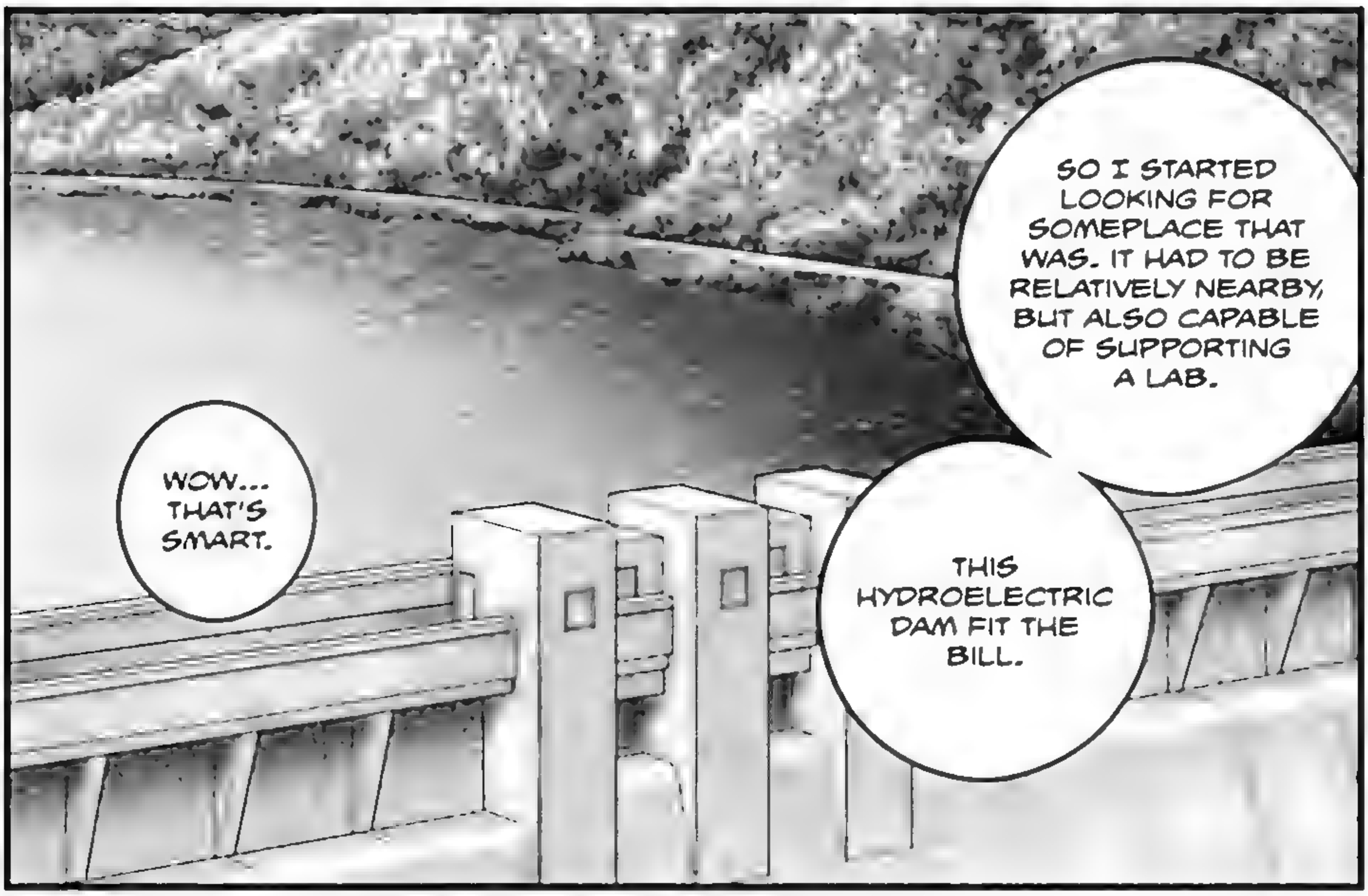

IN FACT, AZUMA'S PROBABLY COMIN' UP SHORT RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

BUT OF ALL THE PLACES WAKAI'S BEEN...
...HOW DID YOU KNOW HE'D SHOW UP HERE AT THE DAM?

YOU SAID YOU SAW A FACILITY WITH HUMAN FETUSES SUSPENDED IN TANKS.
A PLACE LIKE THAT'S GONNA REQUIRE ELECTRICITY, AND A LOT OF IT.

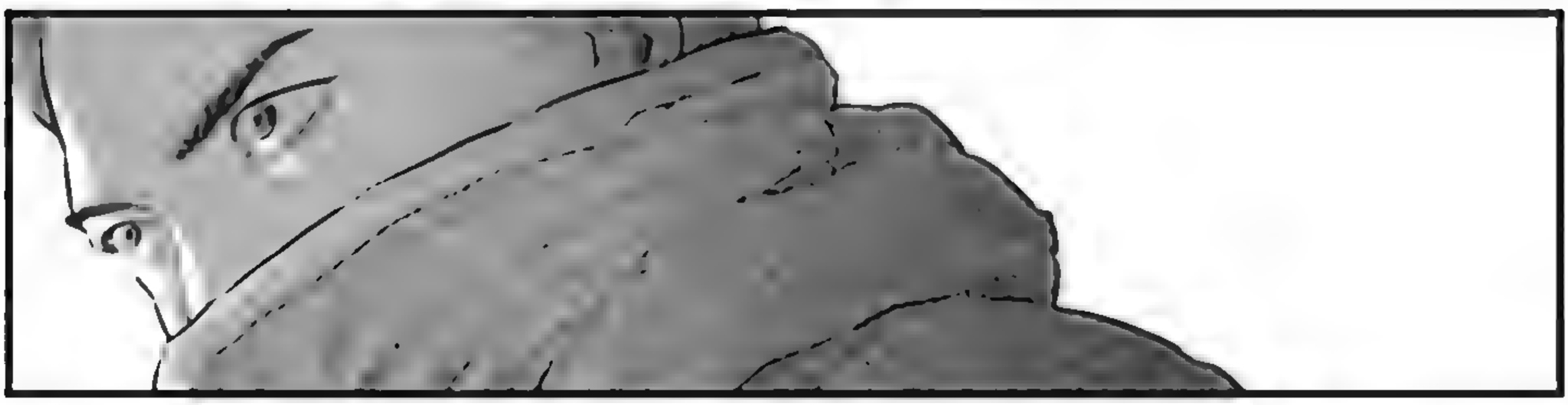
THAT'S THANKS TO YOUR LITTLE FORAY INTO URSINE MEMORIES.


AS FAR AS I COULD TELL, THE VILLAGE WASN'T EQUIPPED TO GENERATE THAT KIND OF POWER.

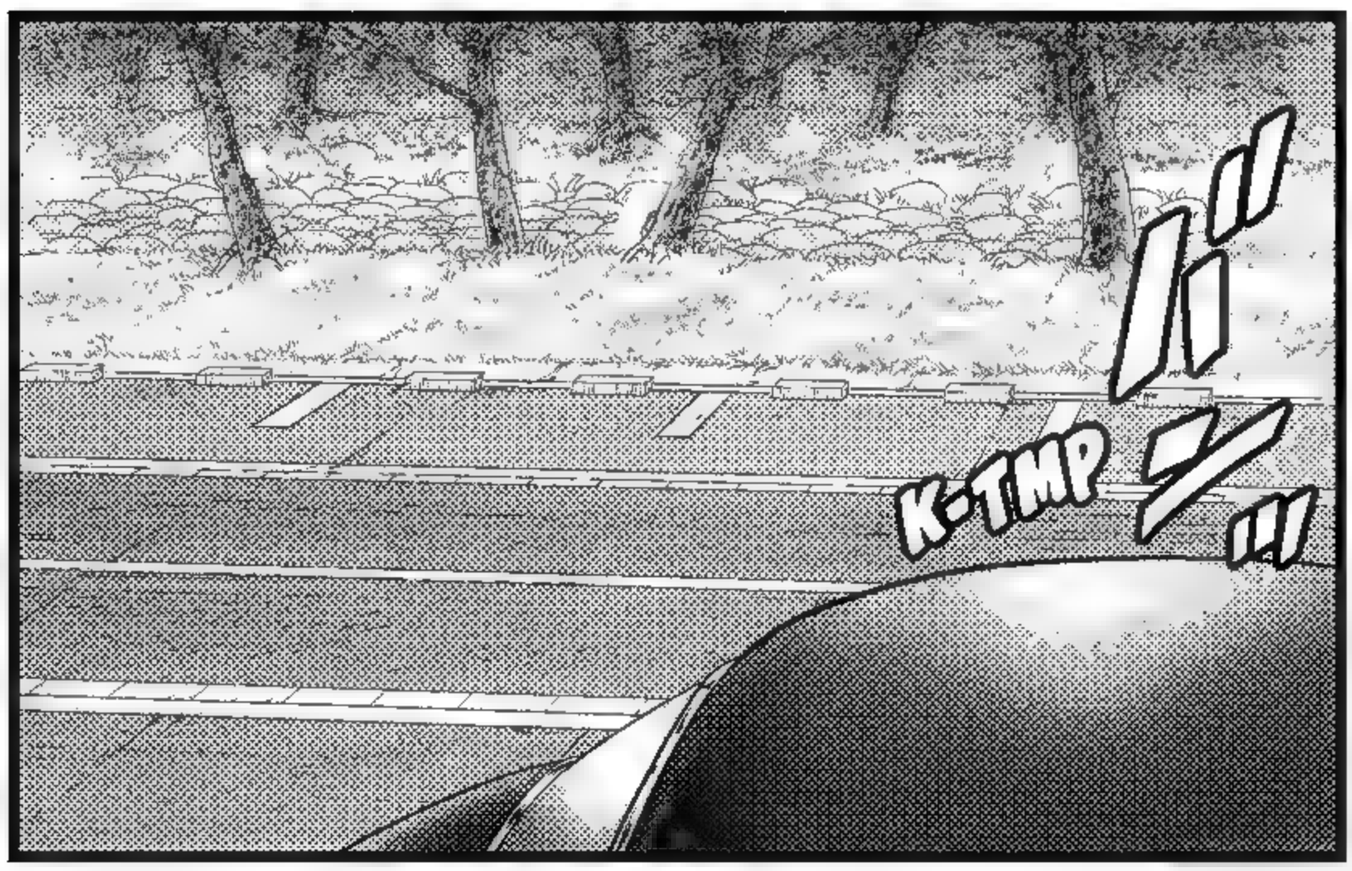

SO I STARTED LOOKING FOR SOMEPLACE THAT WAS. IT HAD TO BE RELATIVELY NEARBY, BUT ALSO CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING A LAB.
WOW... THAT'S SMART.
THIS HYDROELECTRIC DAM FIT THE BILL.

!
KRNCH

BUT NOW THAT WE KNOW WAKAI'S HERE, I'M POSITIVE.
TO BE HONEST, IT WAS A COIN TOSS.
I FEEL LIKE I'M SEEING YOU IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT. ... STILL DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT...
...THAT YOU'RE MARRIED, THOUGH.
WAIT, SO YOU WERE GUESSING ?!

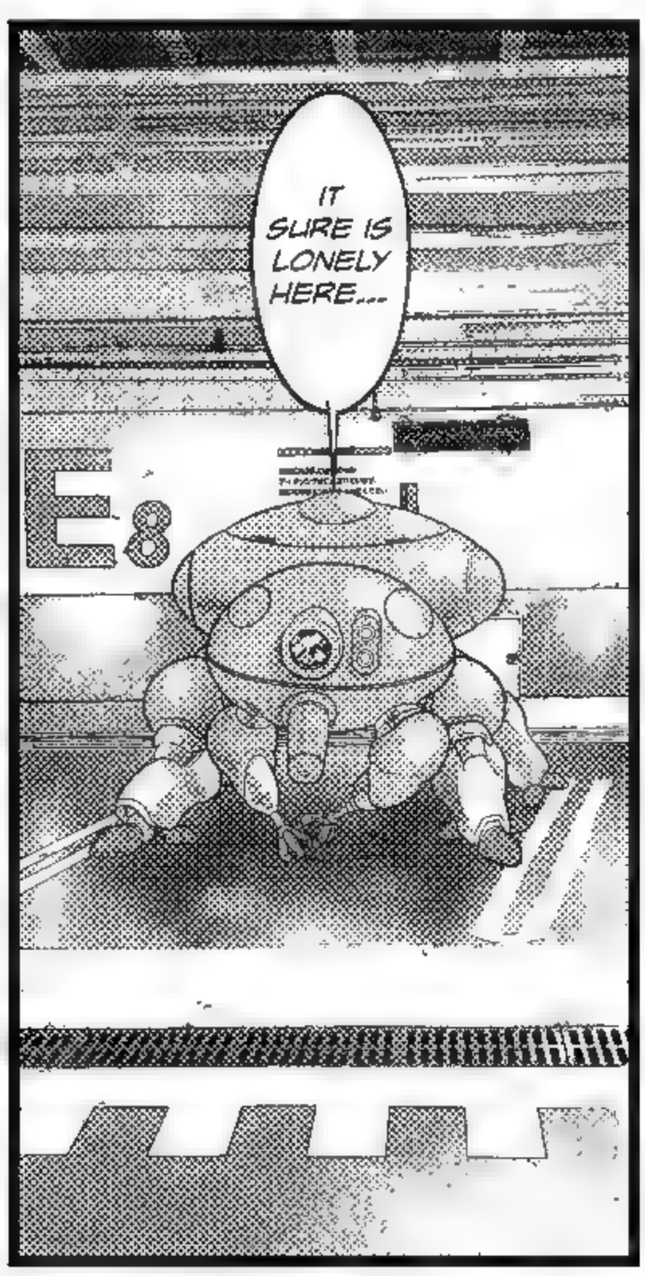


THERE'S OUR MAN.

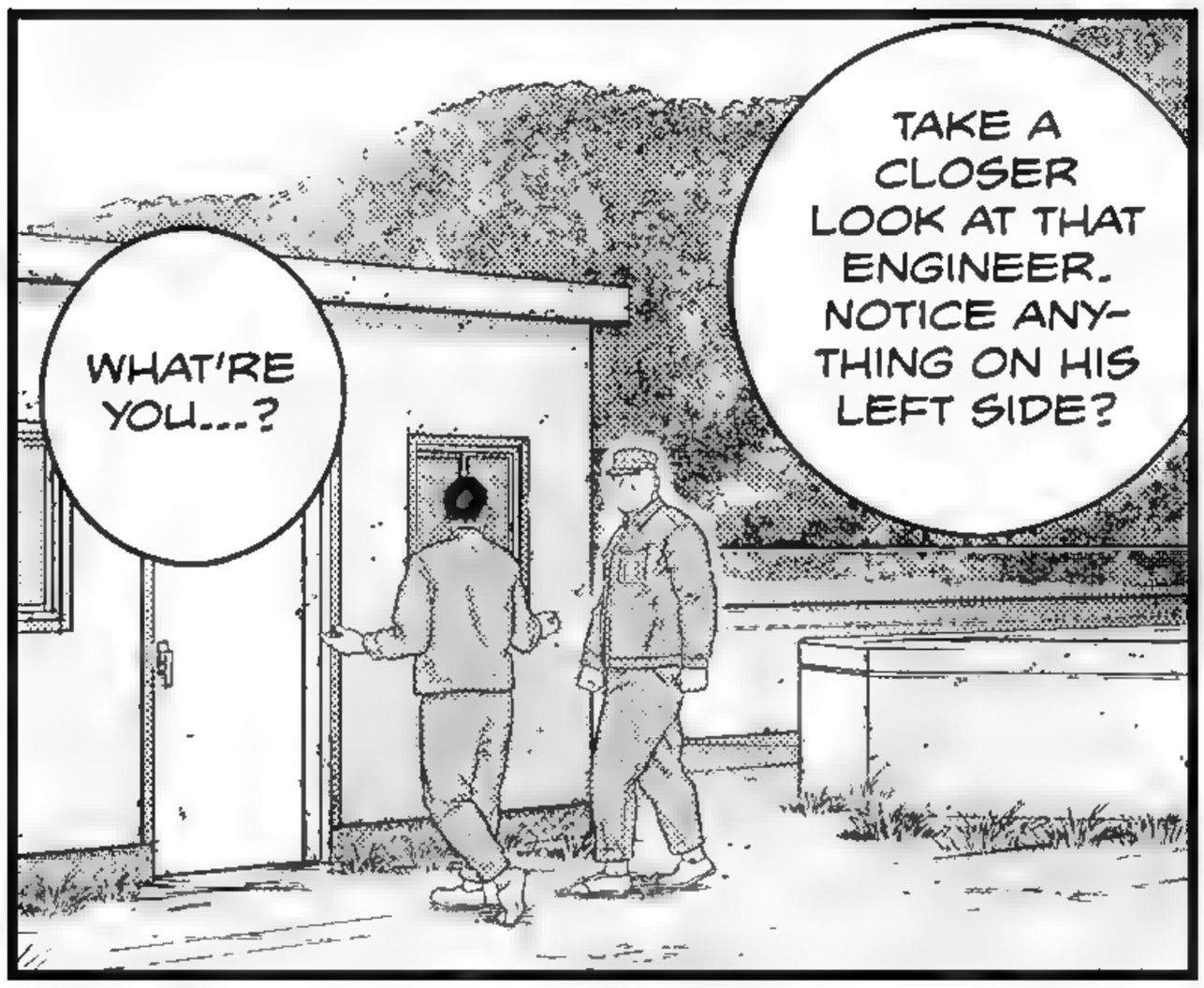

K-TMP

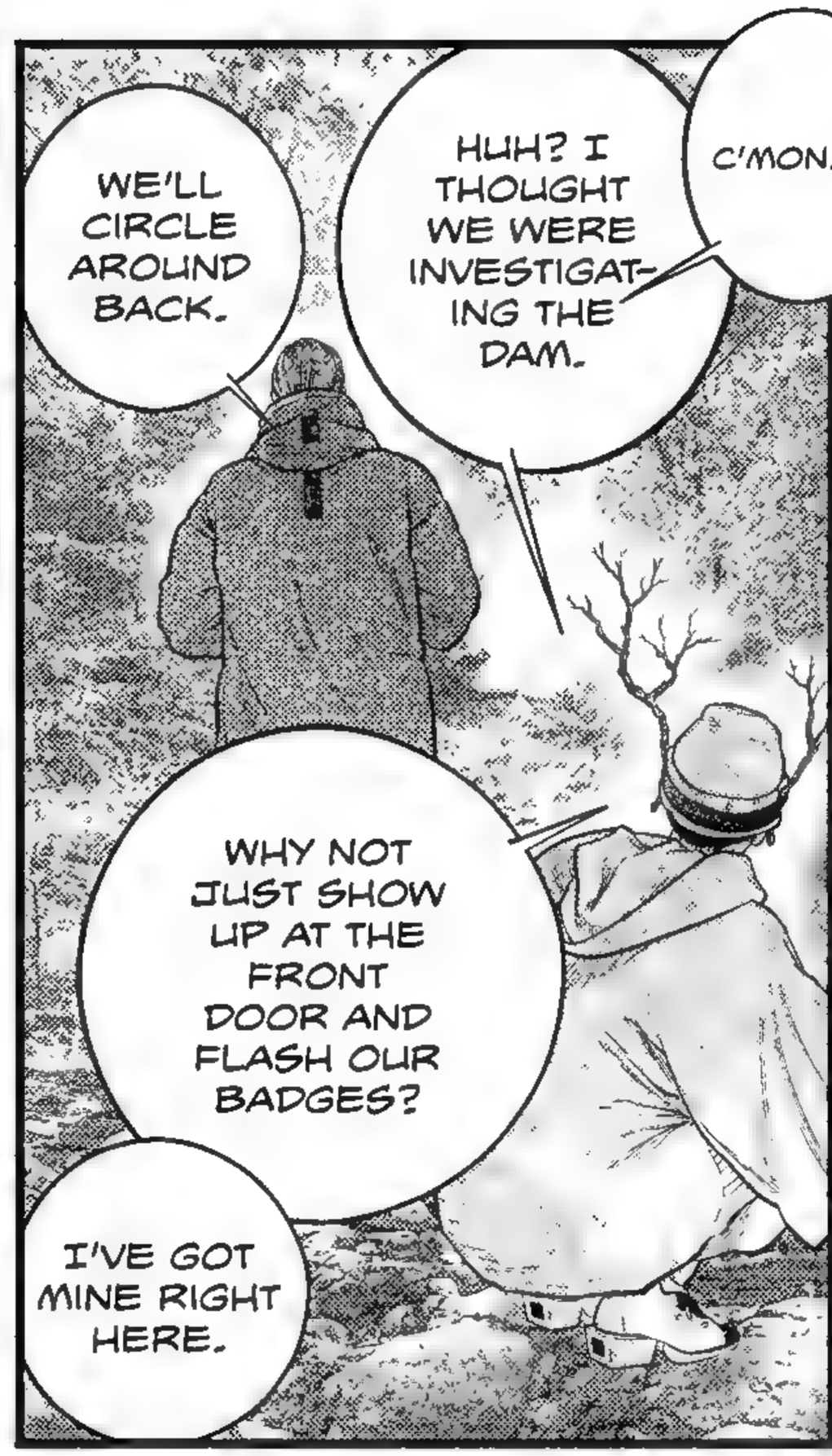
...
VRRRMMM

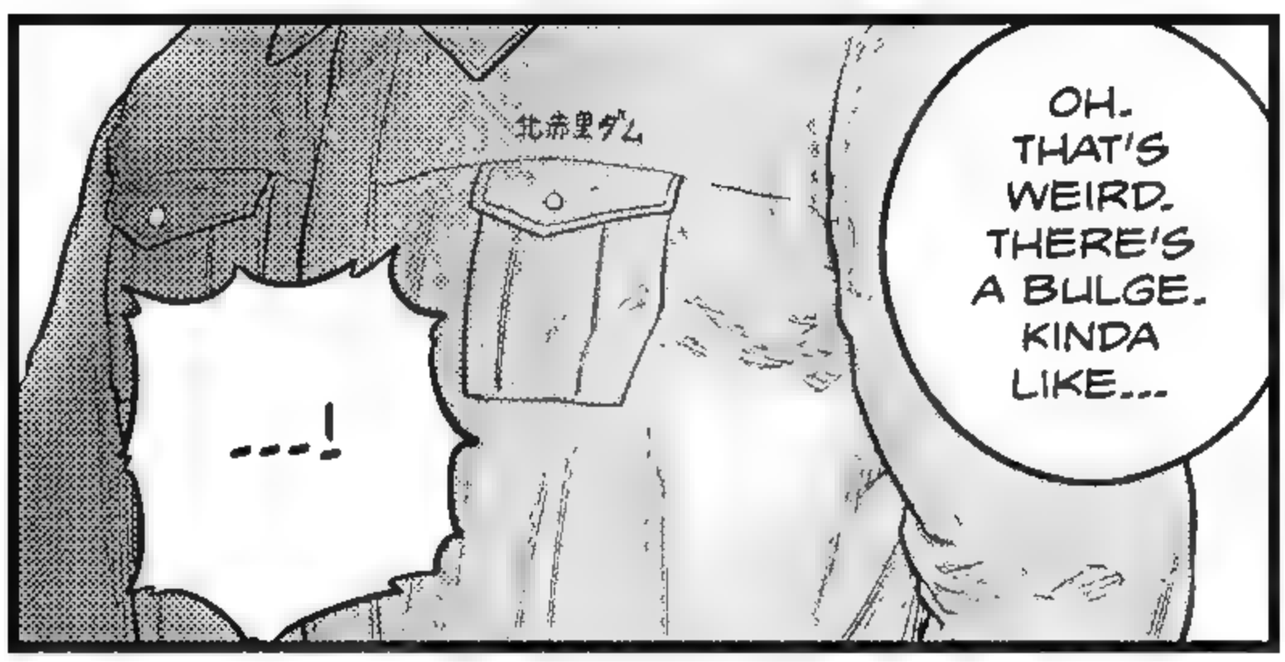
HE'S GONNA GET AWAY!
AREN'T YOU GONNA DO SOME-THING?


IT SURE IS LONELY HERE...
E8

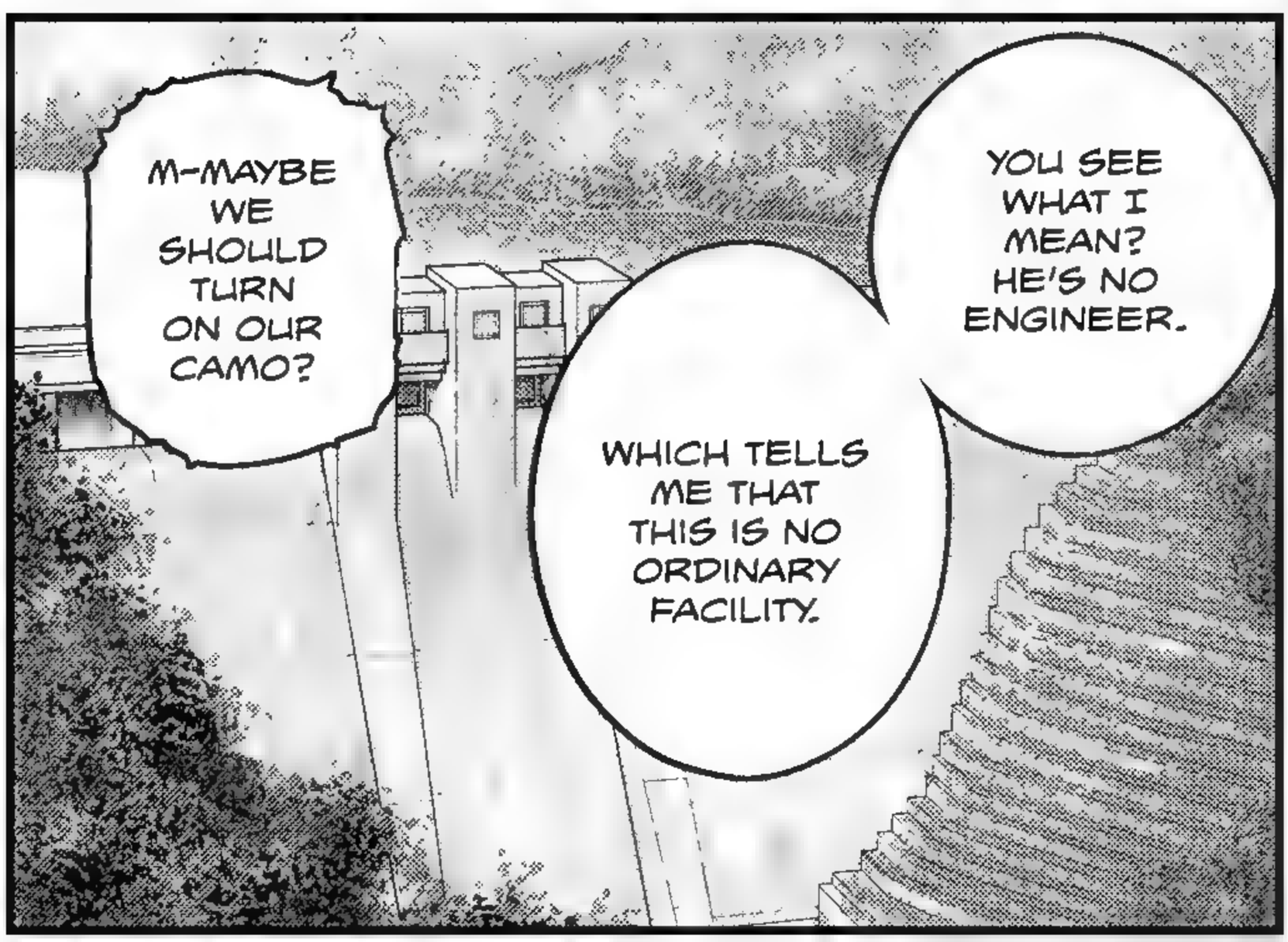
NO, IT'S PARKED BACK IN DOWNTOWN TOWADA.
CALM DOWN. THE FUCHIKOMA CAN TAIL WAKAI.
THERE'S A FUCHI-KOMA? HERE?!
OH, I SEE HOW IT IS. ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR SIDE PIECES, HUH?


WHAT'RE YOU...?
TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT ENGINEER. NOTICE ANYTHING ON HIS LEFT SIDE?


WE'LL CIRCLE AROUND BACK.
HUH? I THOUGHT WE WERE INVESTIGATING THE DAM.
C'MON.
WHY NOT JUST SHOW UP AT THE FRONT DOOR AND FLASH OUR BADGES?
I'VE GOT MINE RIGHT HERE.


北赤里ダム
...!
OH. THAT'S WEIRD. THERE'S A BULGE. KINDA LIKE...

...


M-MAYBE WE SHOULD TURN ON OUR CAMO?
YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN? HE'S NO ENGINEER.
WHICH TELLS ME THAT THIS IS NO ORDINARY FACILITY.

HE'S GOT A GUN.

THEN HOW EXACTLY ARE WE GETTING IN—
SAVE IT FOR WHEN WE NEED IT.
YOU SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO OSAKI'S GOONS.
THERMOPTIC DRAINS POWER QUICK UP HERE IN THE NORTH.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO FIND *THIS* PLACE?
NOT ME. THANK SAITO'S EYE IN THE SKY.

WHOA. WHAT'S A DOOR DOING WAY OUT HERE?
IT'S AN OUTLET FOR THE INSPECTION GALLERY. WE CAN USE IT TO SNEAK IN.

WHOA! YOU HACKED INTO THE SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM?
NO. I JUST DISABLED THE CAMERA.
LOOK, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WE MIGHT RUN INTO.

SHRRM...
THERE WE GO.

!
THE SAFETY'S DOWN THERE BY THE–
FWIP

YOU KNOW HOW TO USE ONE OF THESE?

LEAD THE WAY.

MY MARKS-MANSHIP SCORES AREN'T HALF BAD, Y'KNOW?
...
YEAH. I TOOK THE TRAINING COURSE.
SAITO EVEN GAVE ME SOME POINTERS BEFORE WE HEADED OVER HERE.

SQRRK...

ALL RIGHT. HERE GOES.

CREEPY. IT LOOKS LIKE IT GOES STRAIGHT DOWN TO HELL.

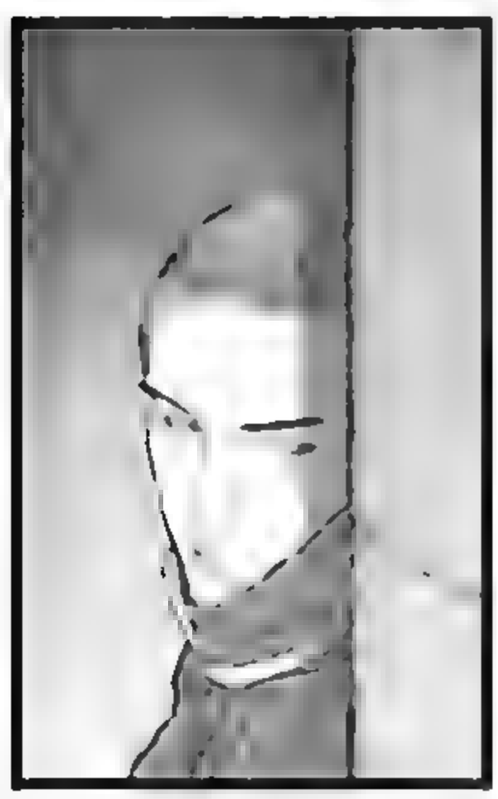
JUST DON'T PANIC AND SHOOT ME IN THE BACK.
WHOO! I CAN FEEL THE ADRENALINE PUMPIN' NOW!

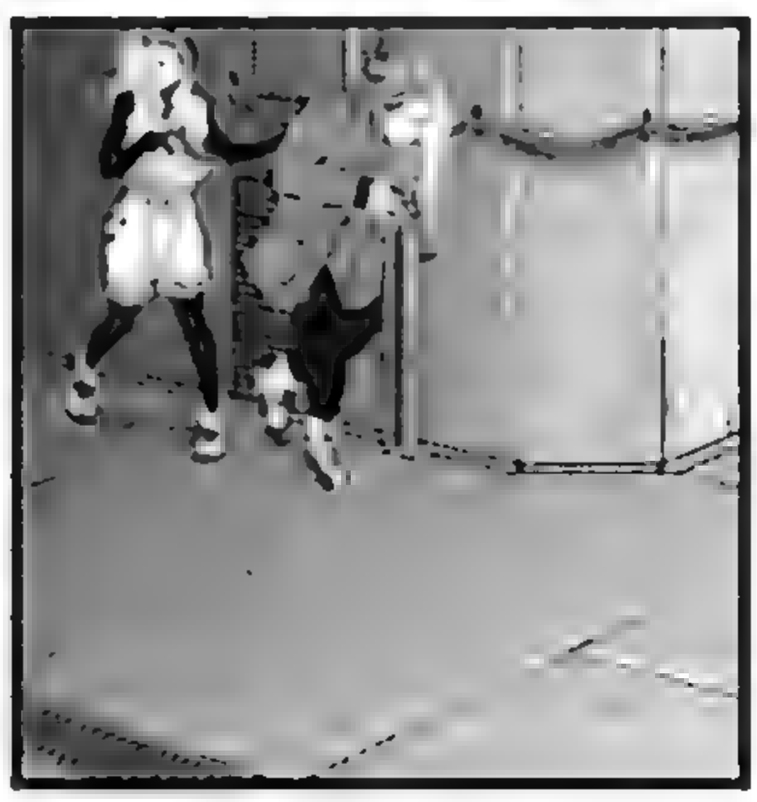
12
DEEP PSYCHE

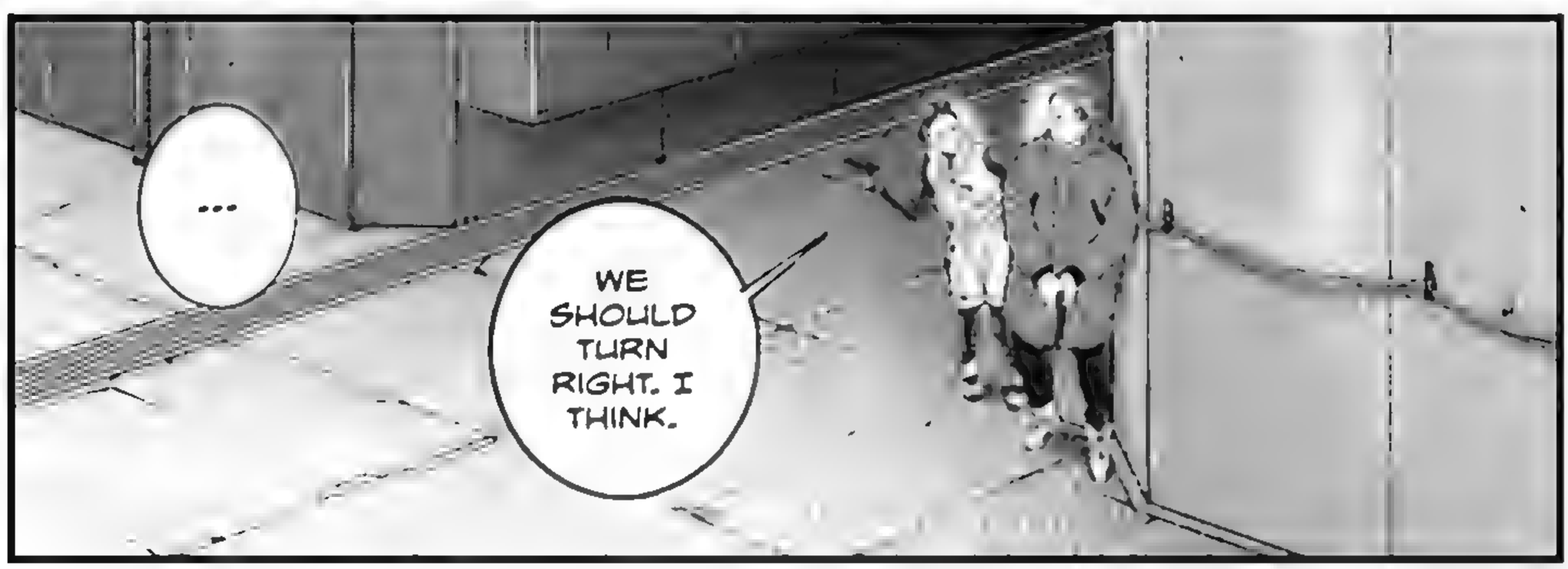
IF I'M RIGHT, THEN WE'RE JUST ABOUT AT THE END OF THIS STAIR—

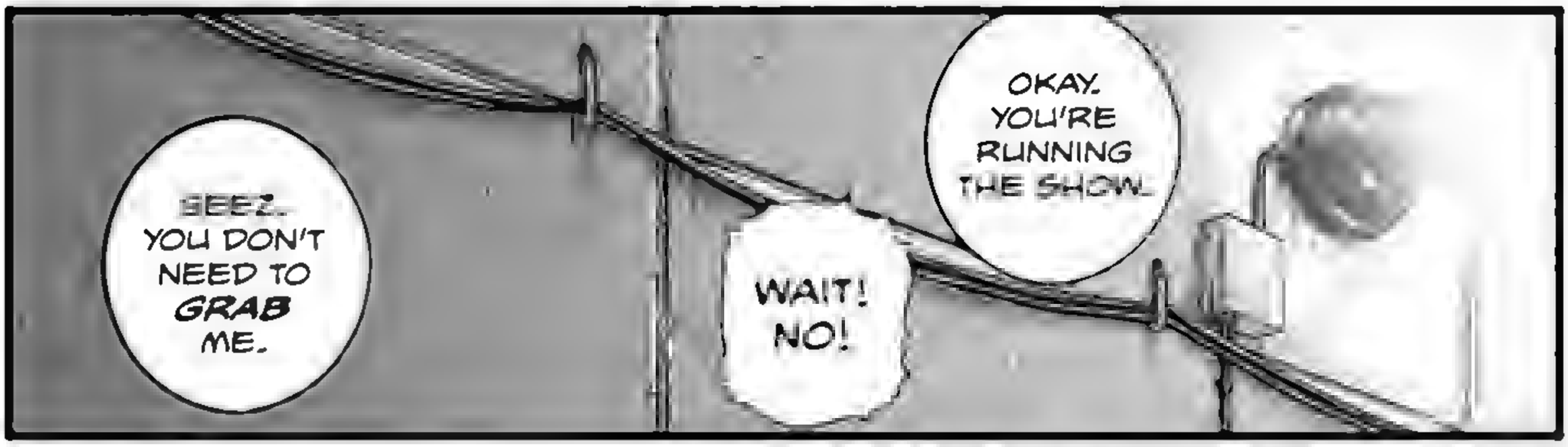
YOU REC-OGNIZE IT?!
THIS MIGHT BE THE PLACE I SAW IN THE WHITE BEAR'S MEMO-RIES.
I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE YET, BUT...

...






...
WE SHOULD TURN RIGHT. I THINK.


SEEZ. YOU DON'T NEED TO GRAB ME.
WAIT! NO!
OKAY. YOU'RE RUNNING THE SHOW.

UMM...
THIS TIME, I'M NOT SURE WHICH WAY TO...
GREAT. ANOTHER FORK.
WHAT IS THIS, A LABY-RINTH?

FWRSH
?!

I CAN... FEEL IT. CALLING ME.

WHAT NOW?
...

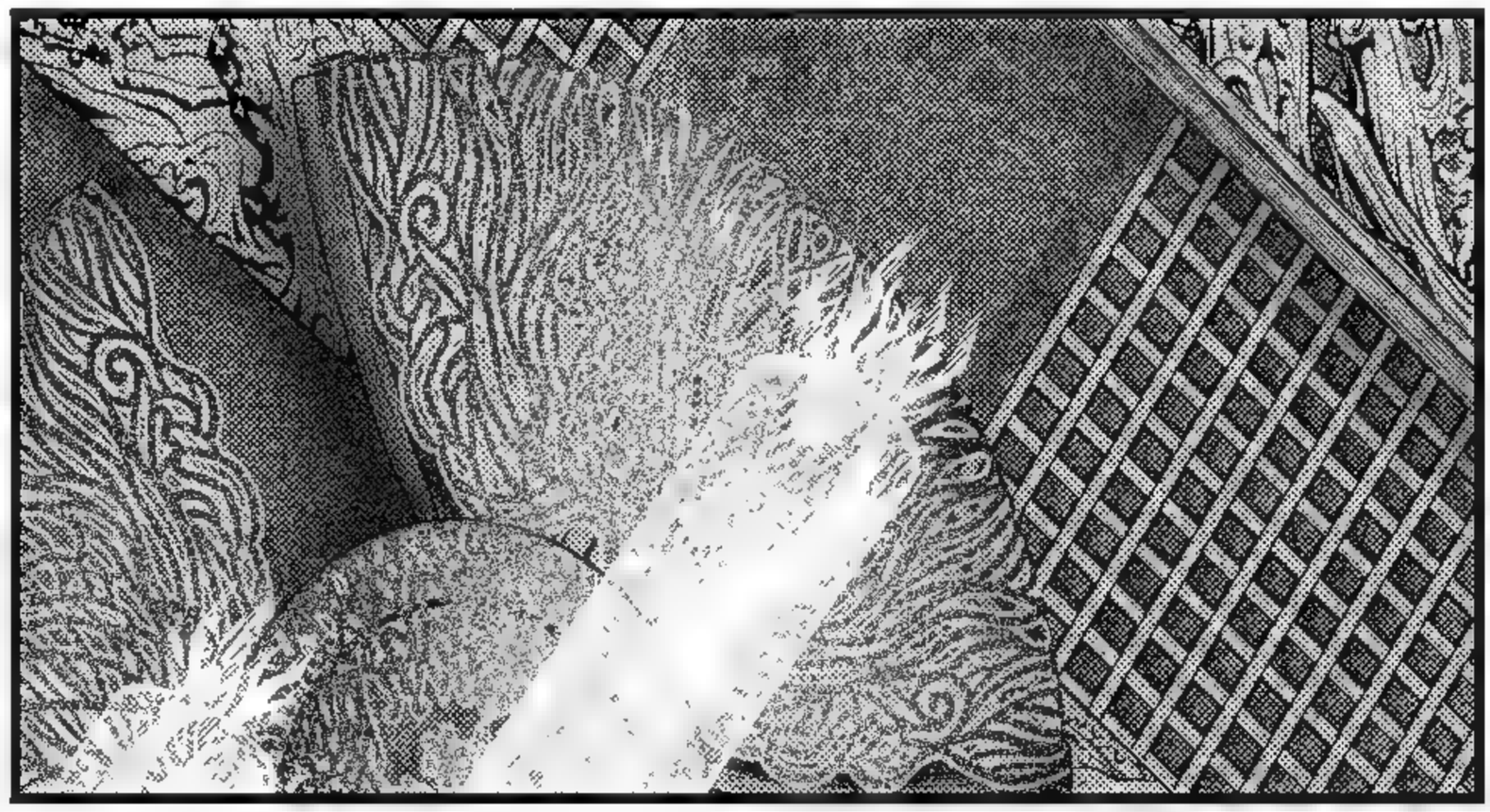
HEY!
HUH?

TSUNAGI! STOP!

IS SHE TRYING...
...TO GET US KILLED?!

CAN YOU SEE IT?

IT'S PULLING ME IN.



...ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ARAMAKI?

IT'S ABOUT THAT NEW RECRUIT YOU PROVIDED. TSUNAGI.

IS THERE A PROBLEM?

I APPRECIATE YOU ACCOMMODATING THE SUDDEN REQUEST.

FOR YOU TO COME PERSONALLY, I MUST ASSUME THE MATTER IS GRAVE.

SHE APPEARS TO HAVE RETAINED MEMORIES OF YOMOTSU.

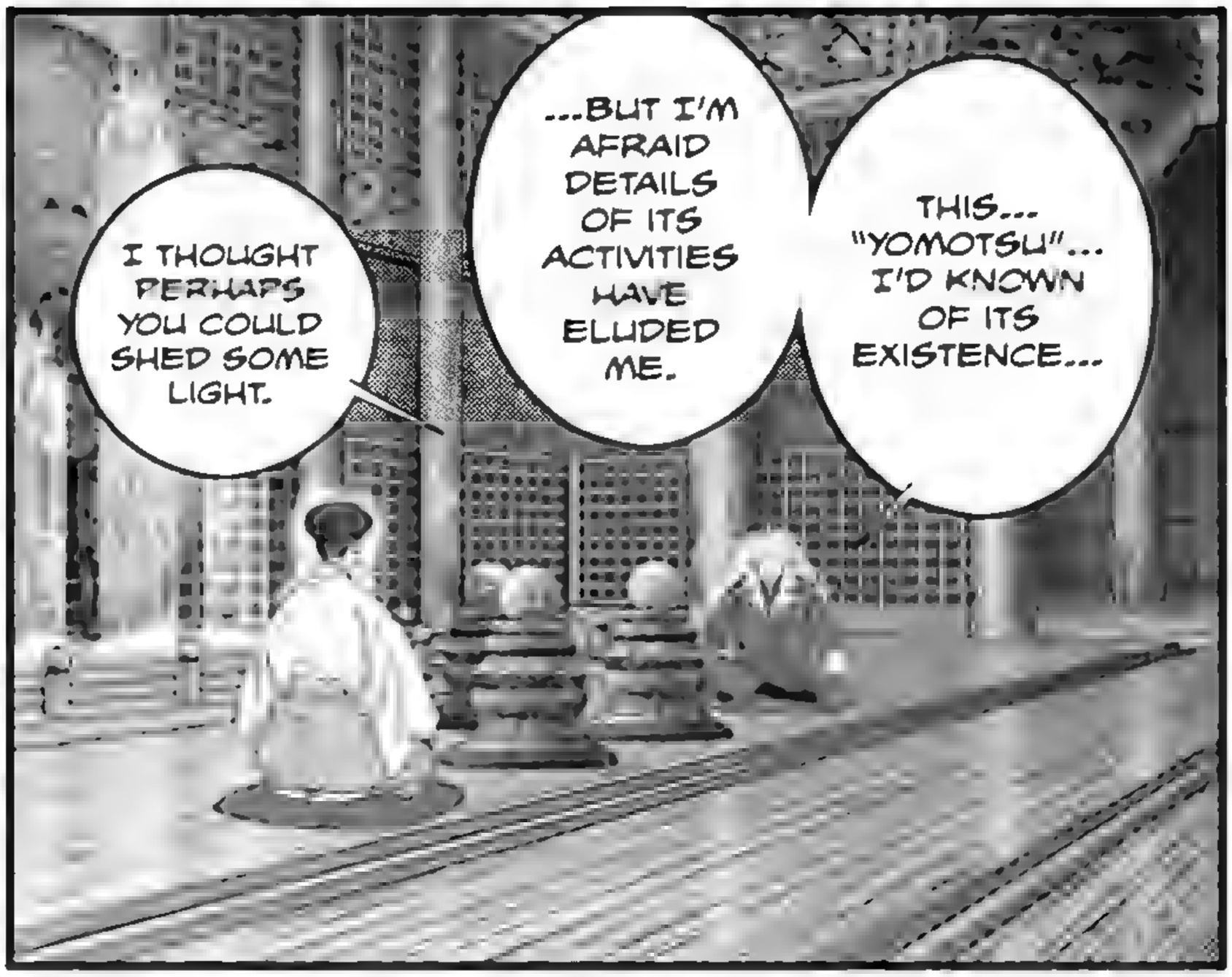
HOW UNEXPECTED ...

HMM... SO ANOTHER HAS SUR-VIVED...

...WAS QUITE THOROUGH— ERASING EVEN THE DEEPEST REGIONS OF MEMORY.

THE CLEANSING UPON HER INITIATION...

AN INDIVIDUAL CONNECTED TO ATERUI SEEMS TO HAVE INFILTRATED HER MIND AND BROUGHT HER INTO SYNC.

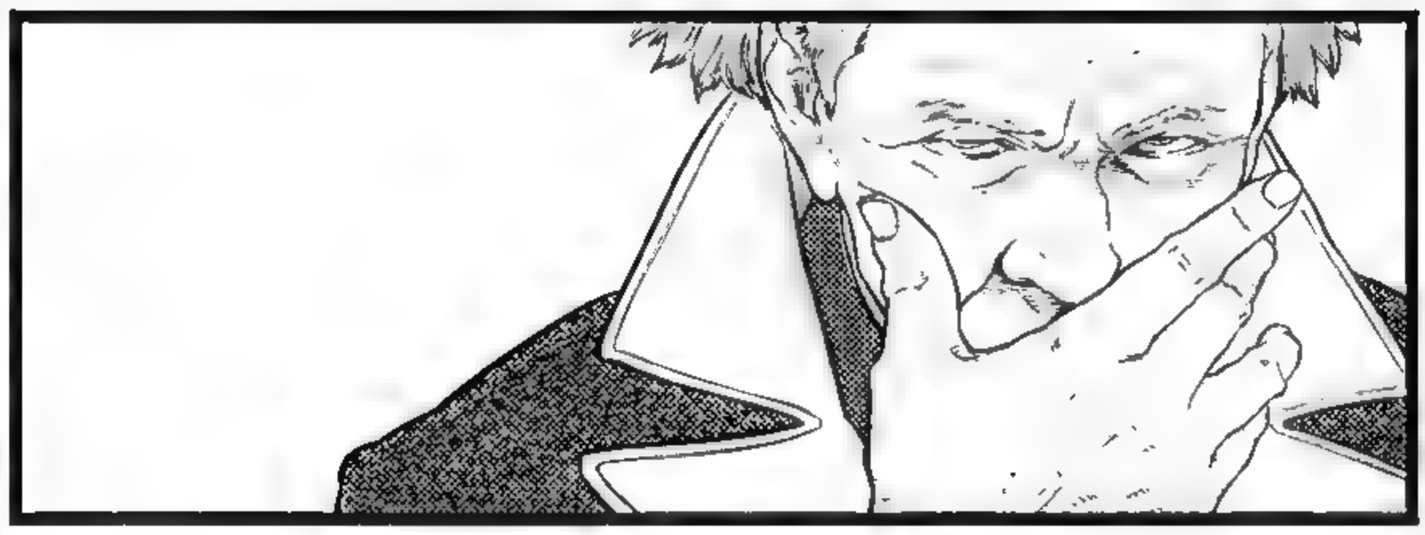

I THOUGHT PERHAPS YOU COULD SHED SOME LIGHT.
...BUT I'M AFRAID DETAILS OF ITS ACTIVITIES HAVE ELUDED ME.
THIS... "YOMOTSU"... I'D KNOWN OF ITS EXISTENCE...

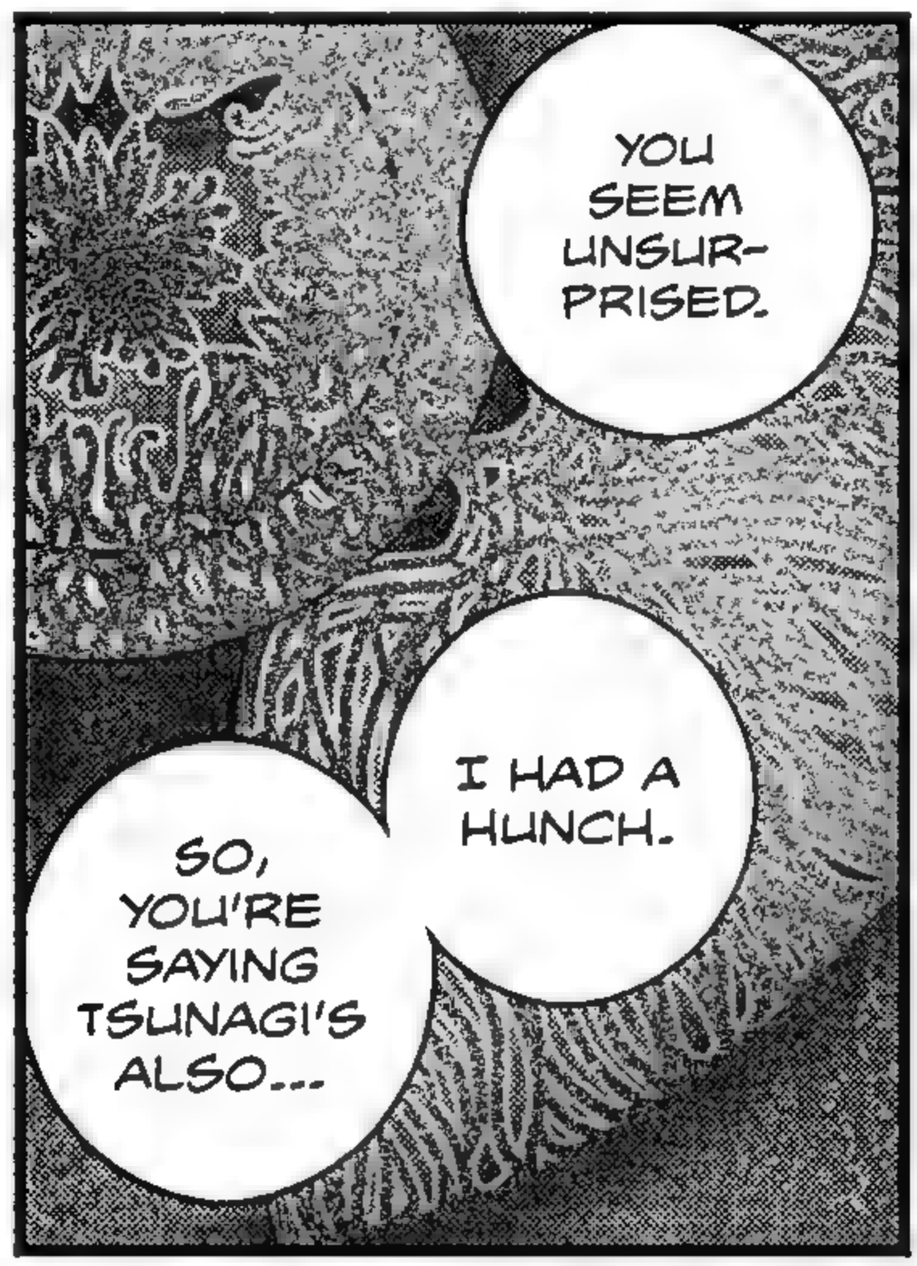
THINK OF YOMOTSU AS A SPIRITUAL COUNTER-PART.
I'VE HEARD THE NAME.
YOU ARE AWARE OF THE ADVANCED PROSTHETICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE?

...YOMOTSU SOUGHT TO REVOLU-TIONIZE THE BIOLOGICAL ORGANISM ITSELF.
WHERE THE INSTITUTE STRIVES TO FURTHER THE ARTIFICIAL BODY...

...YOMOTSU BIRTHED *WEAPONS*— BIOLOGICAL CREATIONS CULTIVATED FOR BATTLE.

AND WHEN THE WORLD WAS EMBROILED IN WAR...





PERHAPS THIS WILL BE A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR HER TO FACE HER ORIGINS.

AND I SAW THIS PANEL, TOO! IT HAD A TEM-PERATURE READING!

THESE ARE THE THINGS THE BABIES WERE INSIDE!

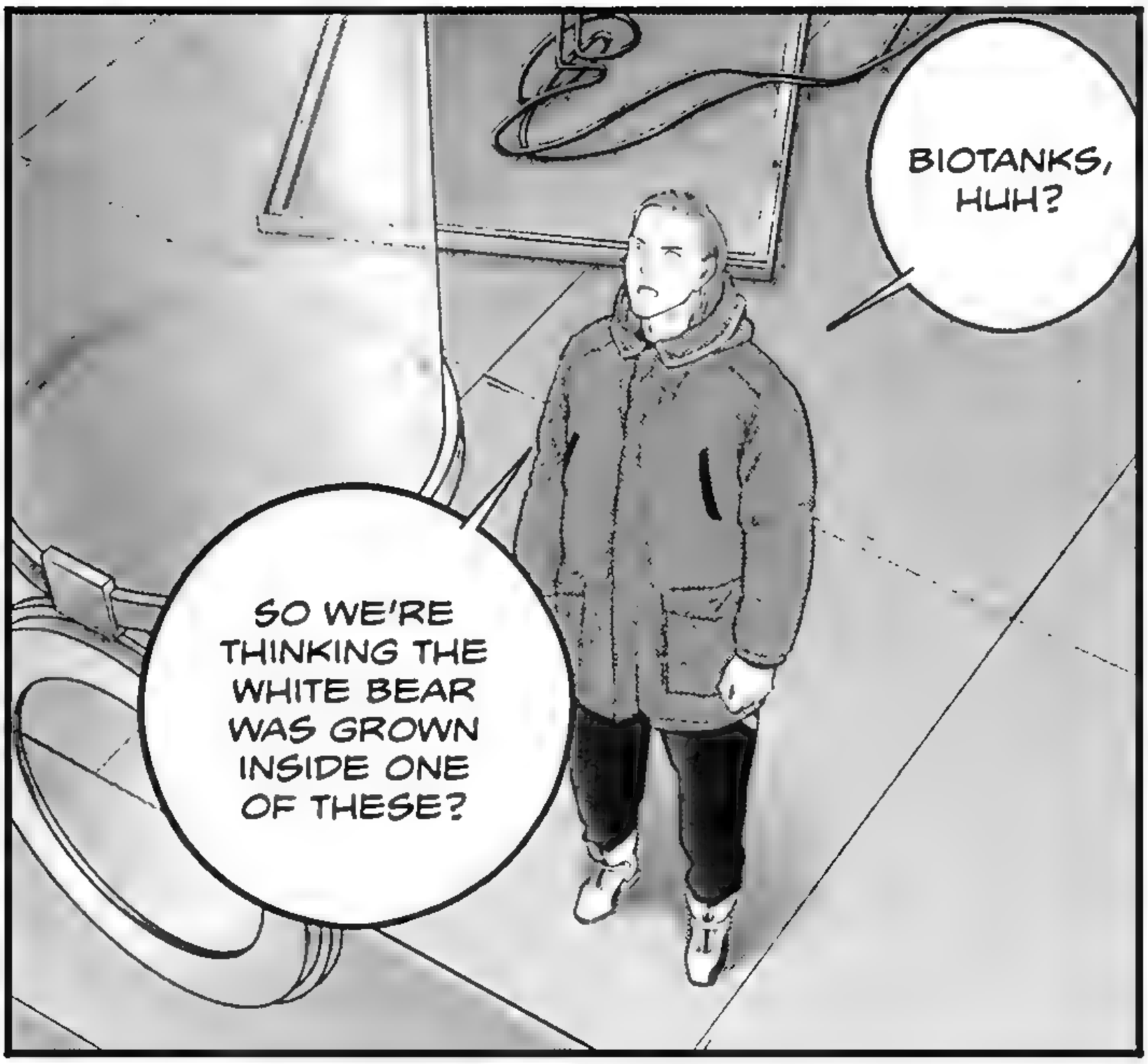
SO THIS IS THE FACILITY. WE REALLY FOUND IT.

!

AND OVER THERE, I SAW–

TH-THIS IS THE PLACE!

THIS IS WHAT I SAW WHEN I CONNECTED WITH THE WHITE BEAR'S MIND!

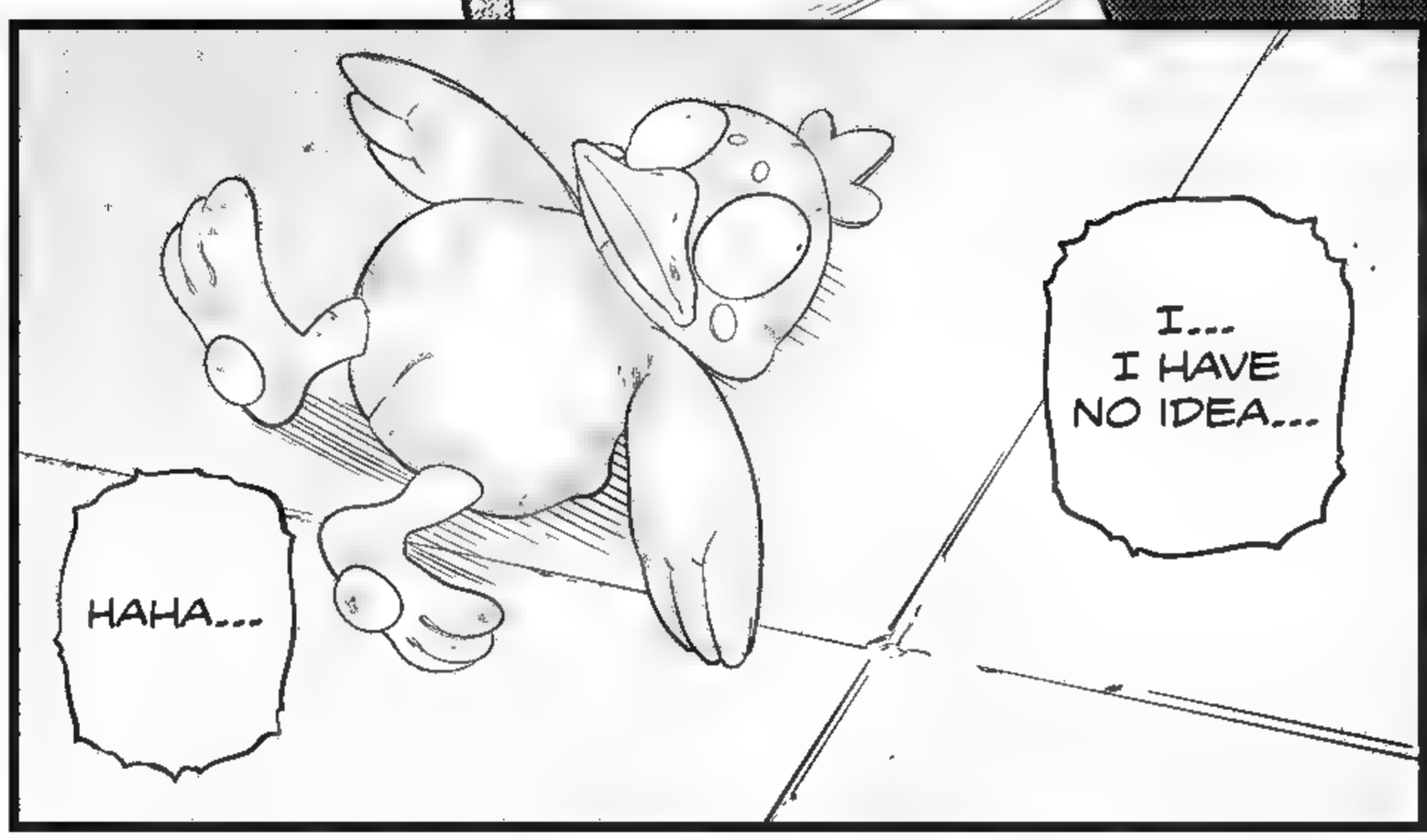

BIOTANKS, HUH?
SO WE'RE THINKING THE WHITE BEAR WAS GROWN INSIDE ONE OF THESE?

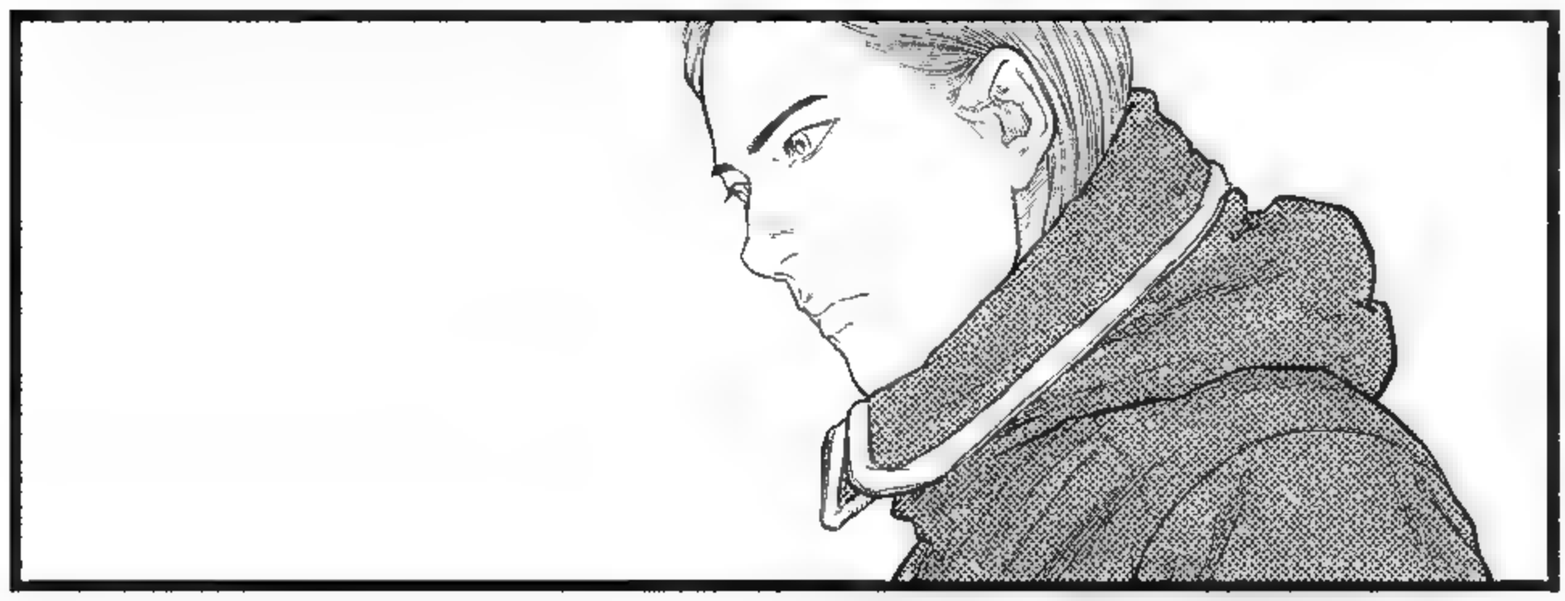
HEY. BACK THERE, YOU SAID...
...SOMETHING WAS "CALLING" YOU. WHAT DID YOU—

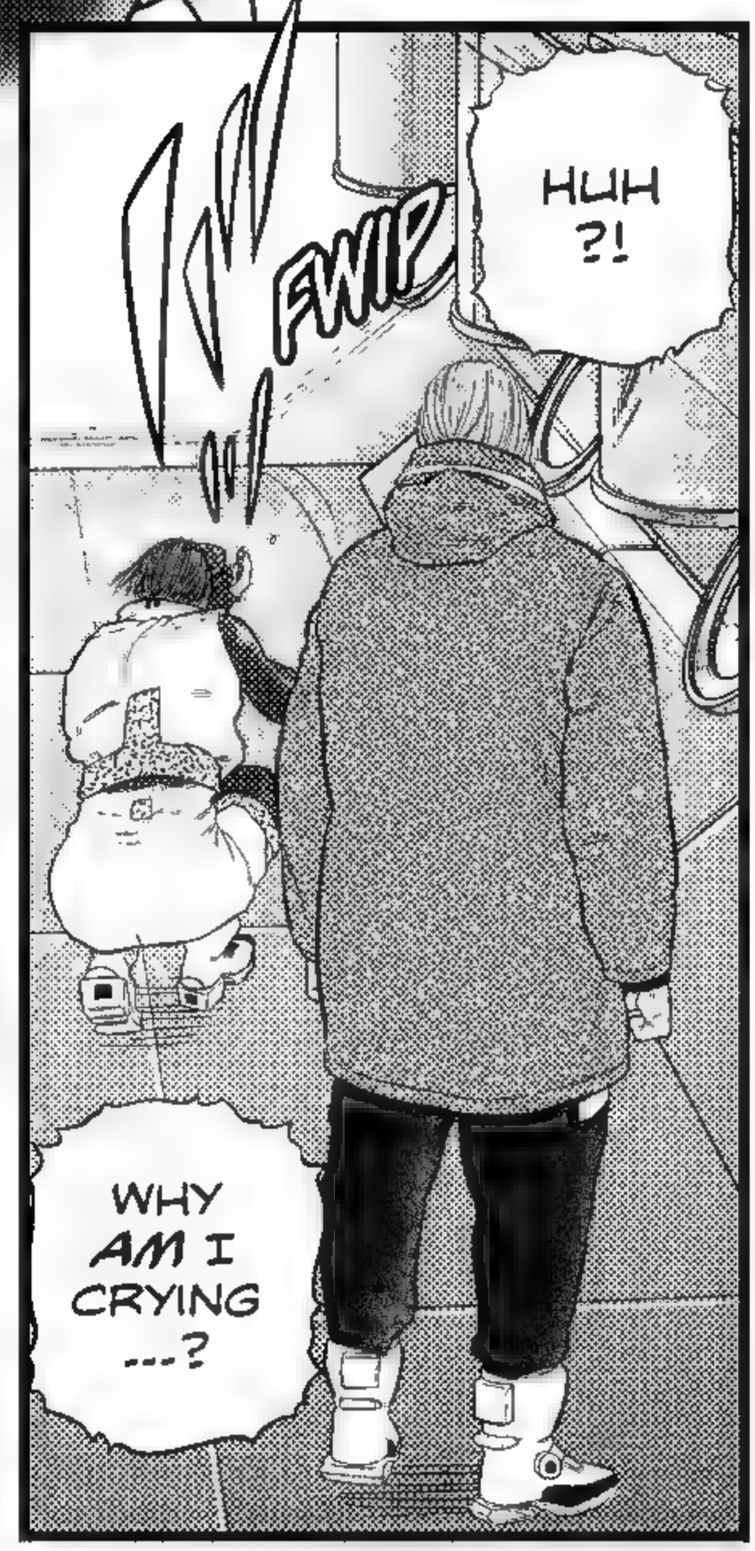
SQUEEZE
THEY WERE OPERATING ON A PRETTY MASSIVE SCALE.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN ABANDONED SINCE THE END OF THE WAR, THOUGH.

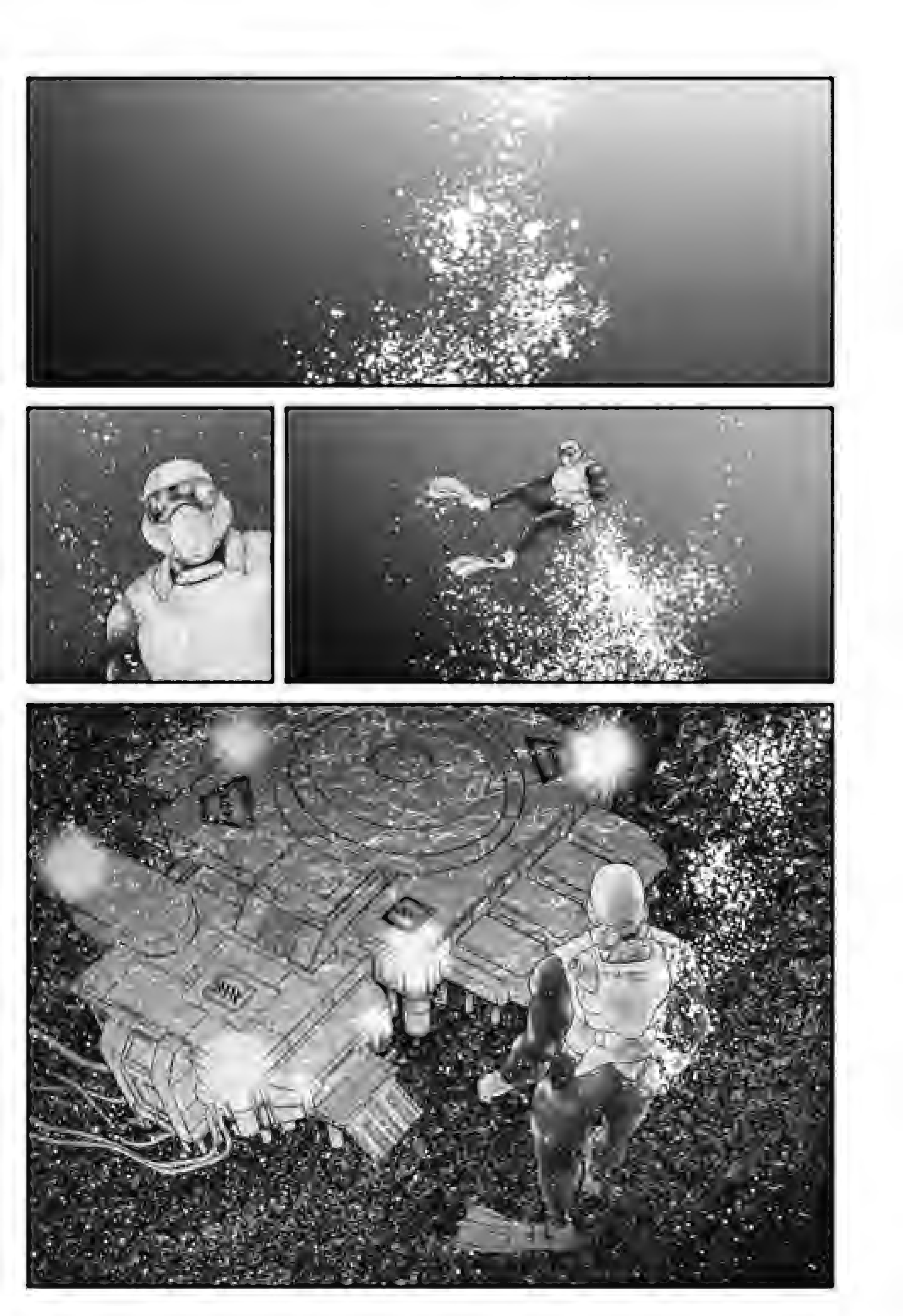
WHAT? I'M NOT CR–

WHOA. WHY'RE YOU *CRYING*?

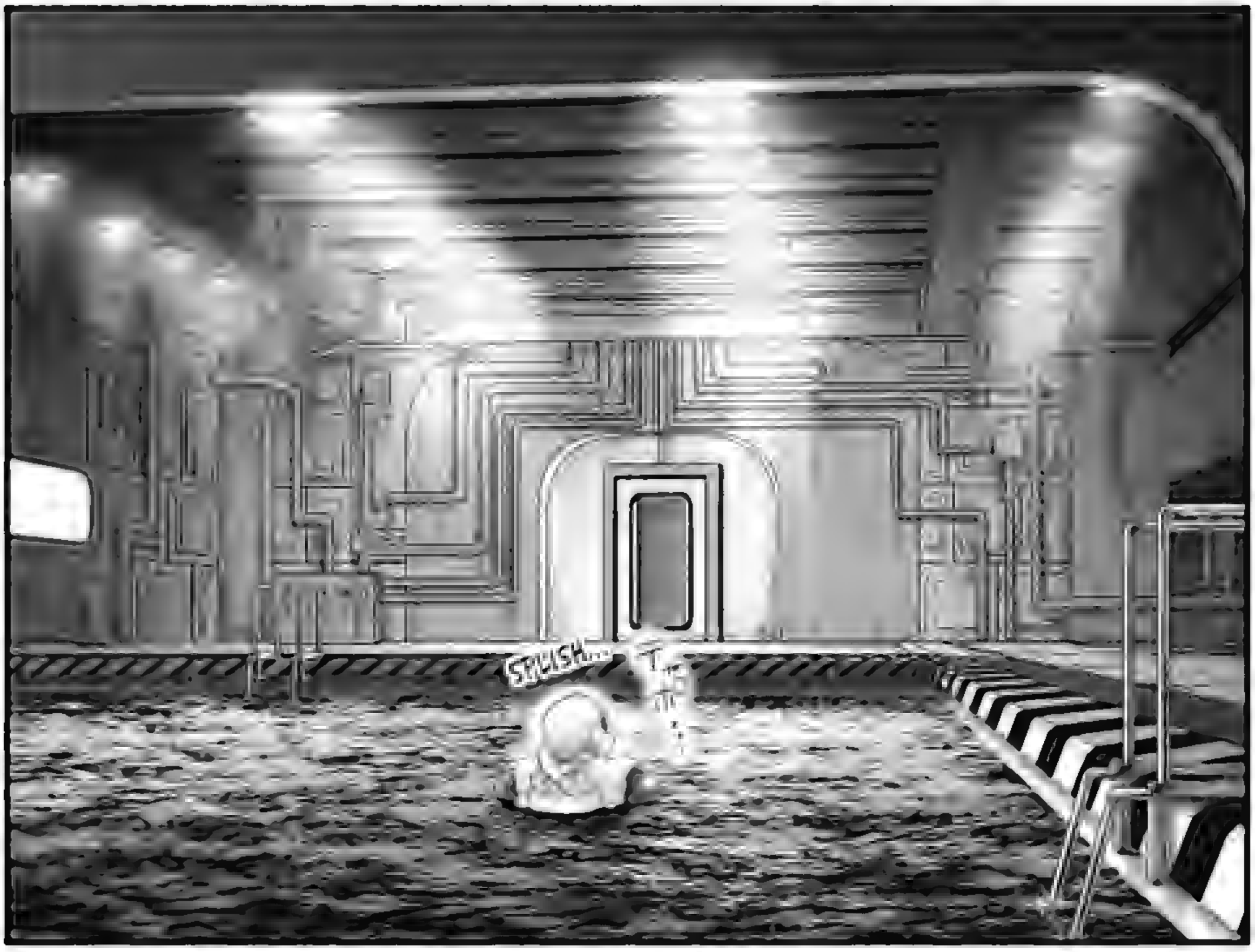


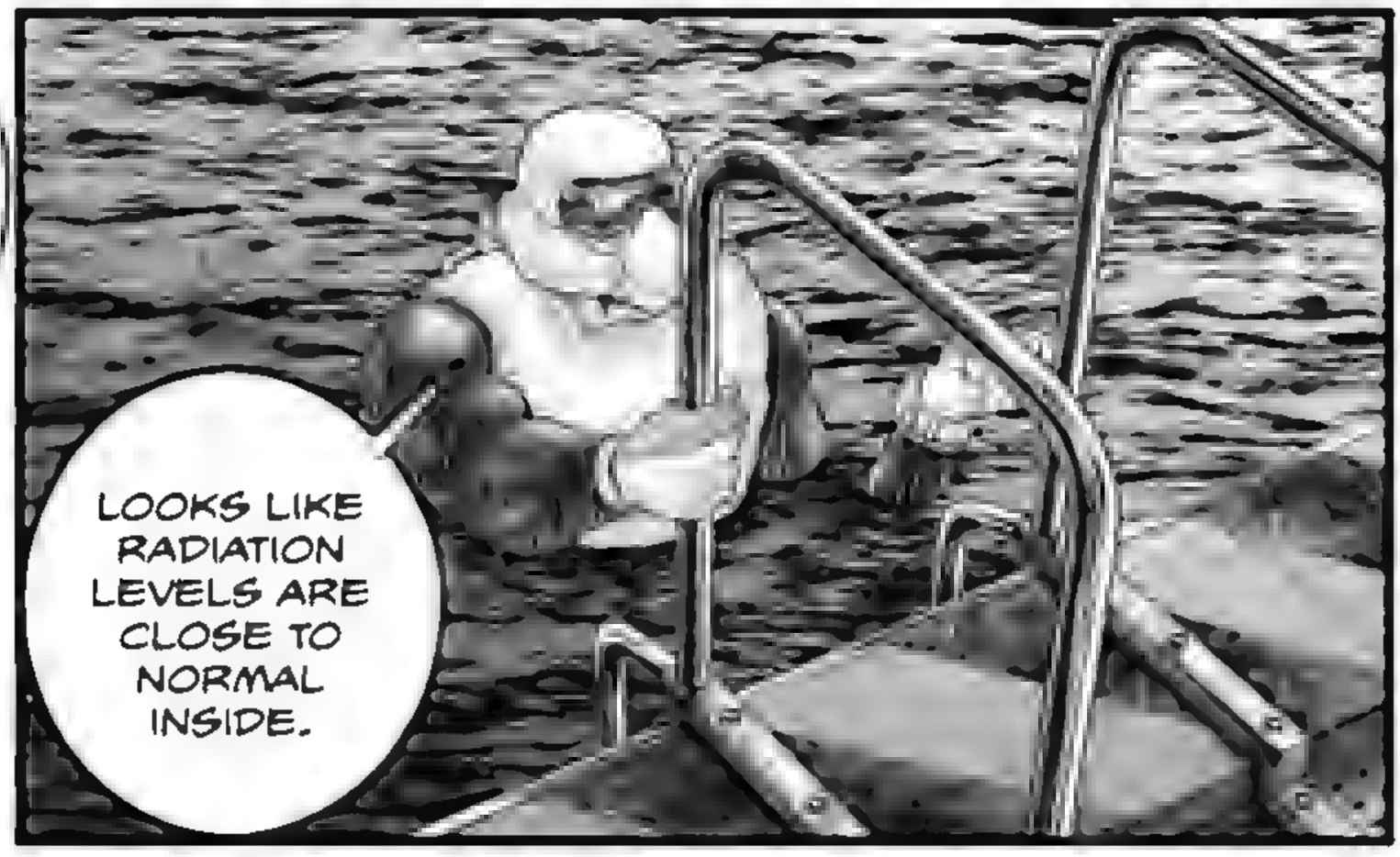




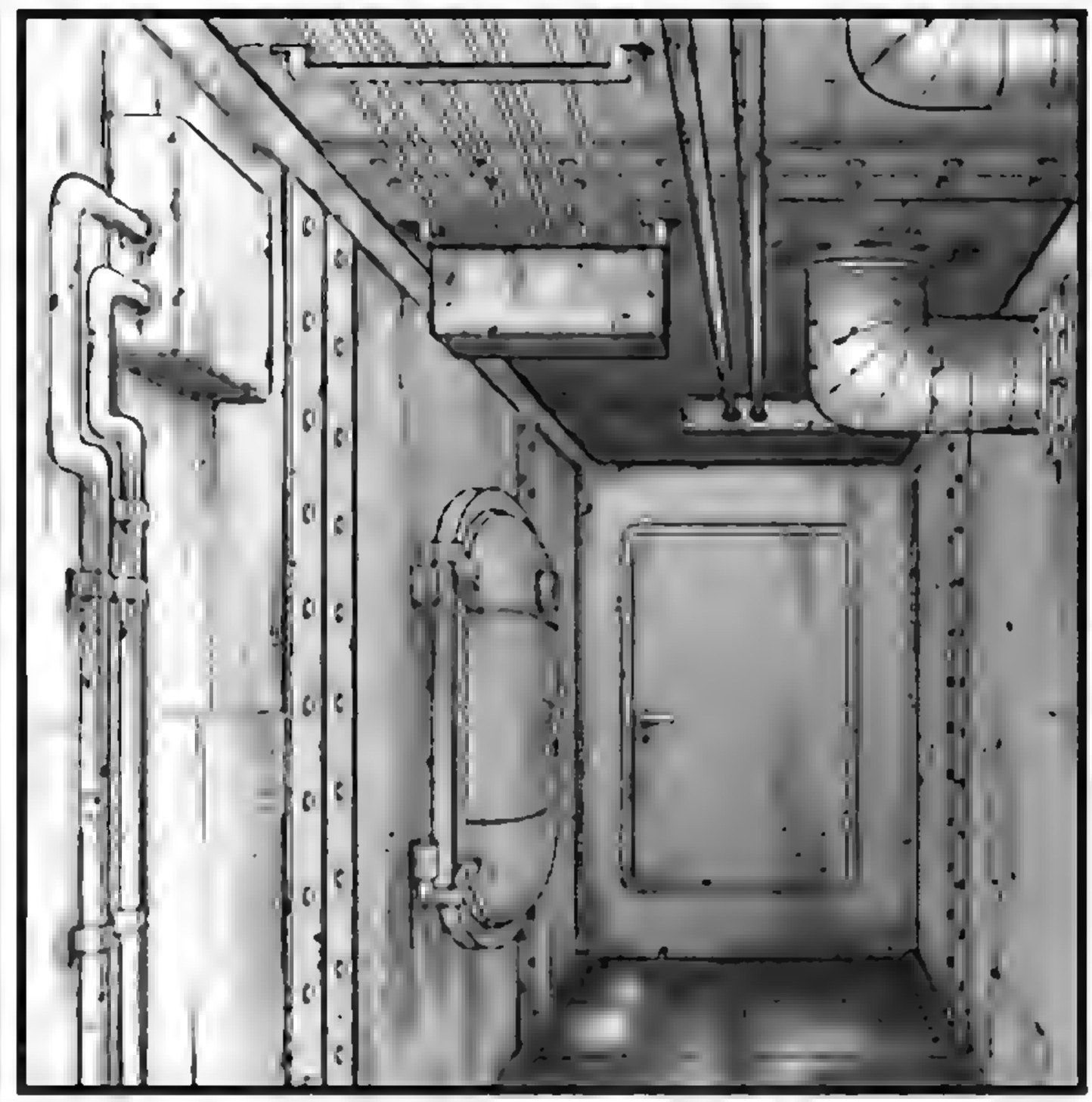


PRETTY DAMN
MASSIVE FOR A
TEMPORARY BASE
OF OPERATIONS...





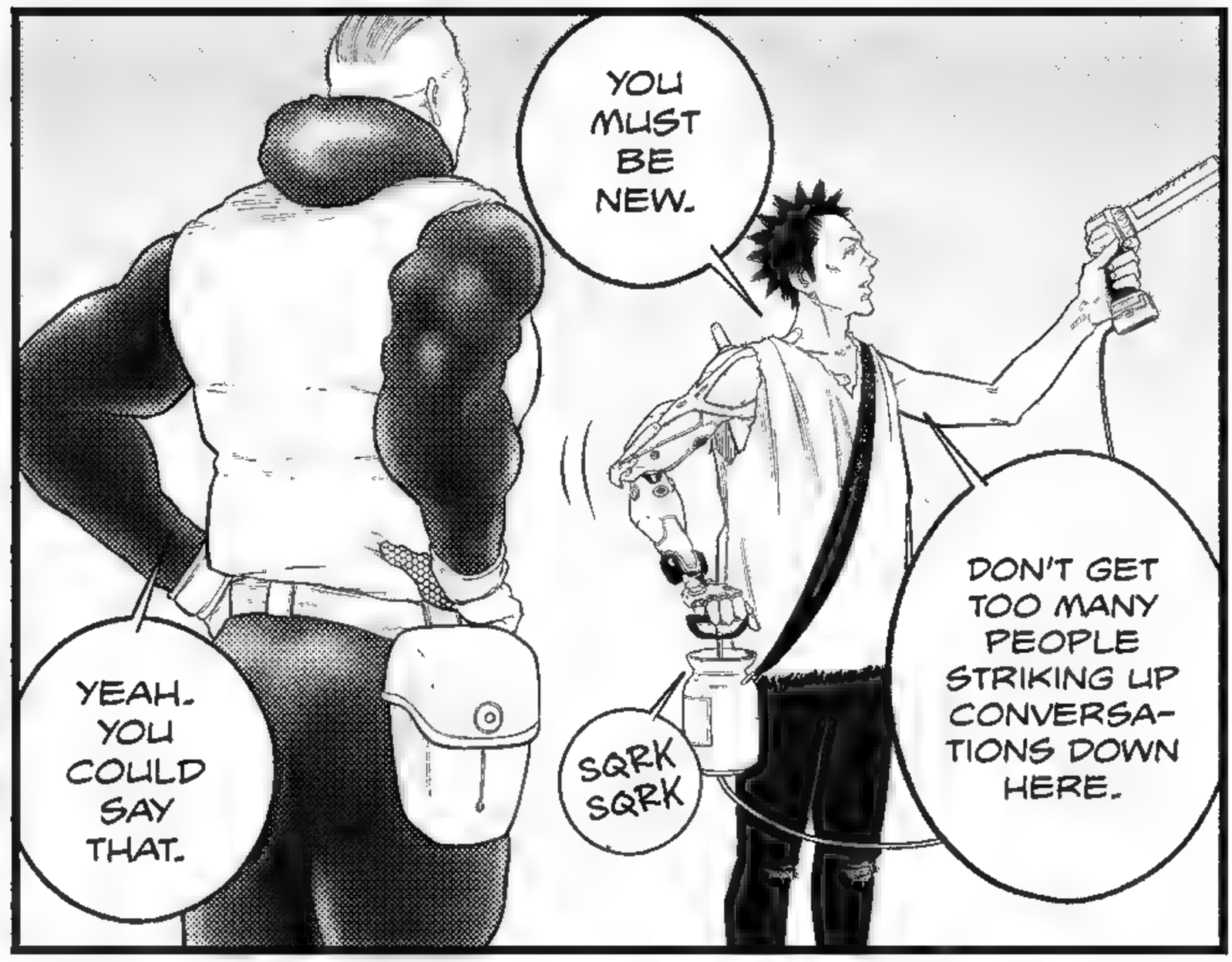
SIGN: NUMBER ONE DIVE PIT



LET'S TRY A LITTLE SOCIAL ENGI-NEER-ING.
HM. A MAINTE-NANCE TECH...

HEY. WHAT'S THE TROUBLE? GOT A LEAK?
!

LUCKY YOU. THAT MEANS YOUR HEAD'S STILL FRESH.
PSHHHRP
EXCUSE ME?


YOU MUST BE NEW.
YEAH. YOU COULD SAY THAT.
SQRK SQRK
DON'T GET TOO MANY PEOPLE STRIKING UP CONVERSATIONS DOWN HERE.

OTHER WAY AROUND.
YOU AIN'T MAKIN' SENSE.
NOT SURE I FOLLOW. YOU SAYIN' I'M GONNA GET POSSESSED?
STAY TOO LONG, AND YOU GOTTA FACE WADATSUMI'S WRATH. Y'KNOW. DRAGON GOD OF THE SEA.

SKREEEK...
HEY, BUDDY...
SKRK

THAT'S A REAL FINE PROSTHETIC YOU'VE GOT...
PSHH

WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU IS, THIS PLACE'LL MELT YOUR BRAIN.
HEH, HEH, HEH...

KA THUNK

FUCK!!!

FUCK!!

"THE PAY IS INCREDIBLE," THEY TELL ME. "DEEP-SEA LABOR. PROSTHETIC INCLUDED! FULLY INSURED!"

NEXT THING I KNOW, I'M LIVIN' IN AN UNDER-WATER *COFFIN*!

FUCK!!

AND THEY'RE TELLIN' ME I AIN'T GOIN' TOPSIDE TO SEE THE SUN UNTIL I MEET SOME DAMN *QUOTA*!

I'M SO *FUCKING* SICK OF THIS PLACE!

FUCK!!

REAL SAD EXCUSE FOR A DRAGON PALACE...

...TO GET ANY WORK DONE WITH THIS GARBAGE HARDWARE?!

GOD DAMN PIECE OF SHIT! HOW DO THEY EXPECT ME...

...

FUCK!!

KLANG

KLANG

STAY THE HELL OUTTA THIS!

WHOA THERE, BUDDY...

HFF... HFF...

HFF...

HFF...

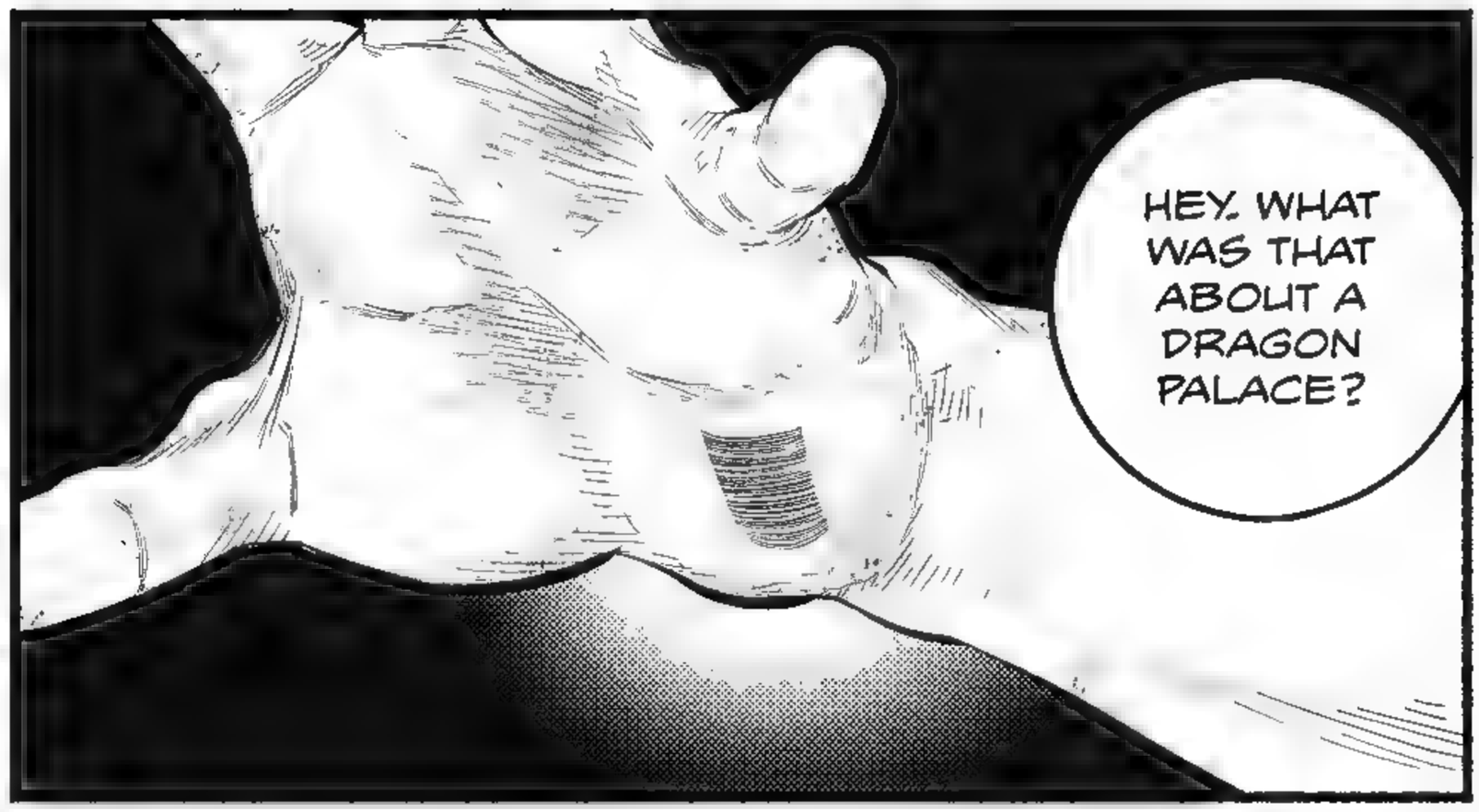
HFF...

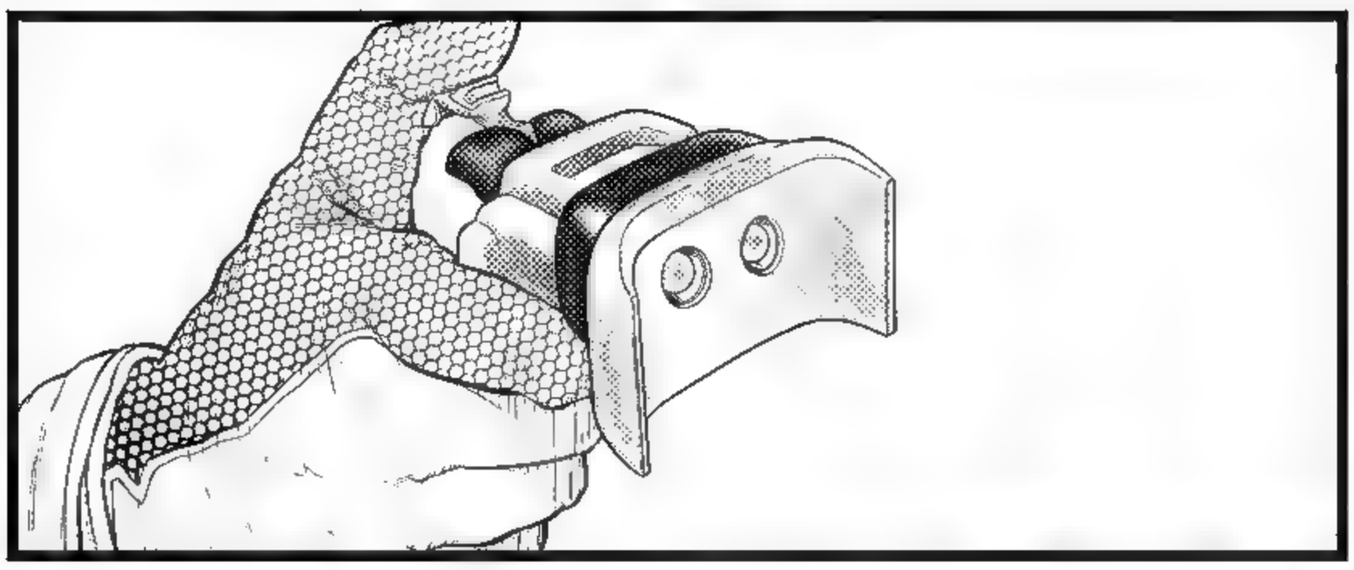
IT'S THESE *WALLS.* THEY START TO *GET* TO YOU.

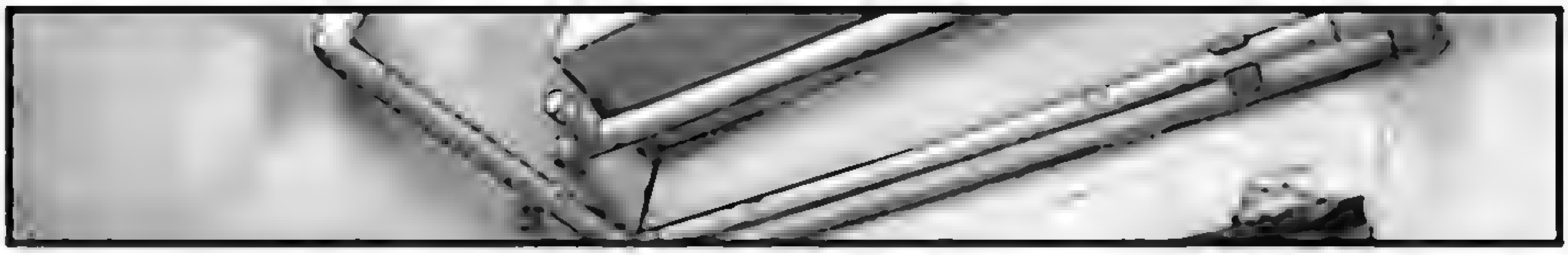
YOU GET WHY, THOUGH, RIGHT?

...SORRY ABOUT THAT.

JUST LOST MY COOL FOR A MINUTE.







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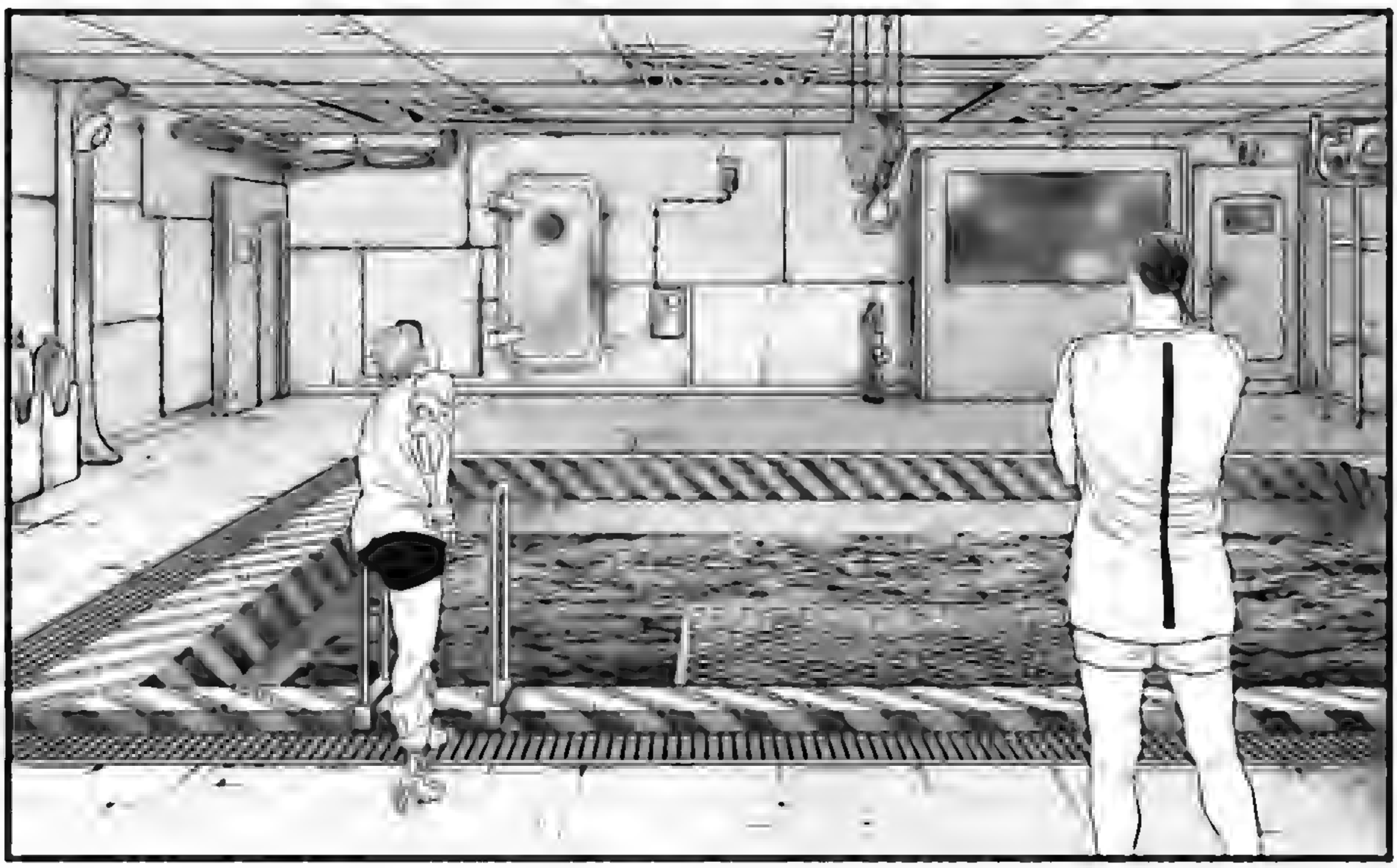
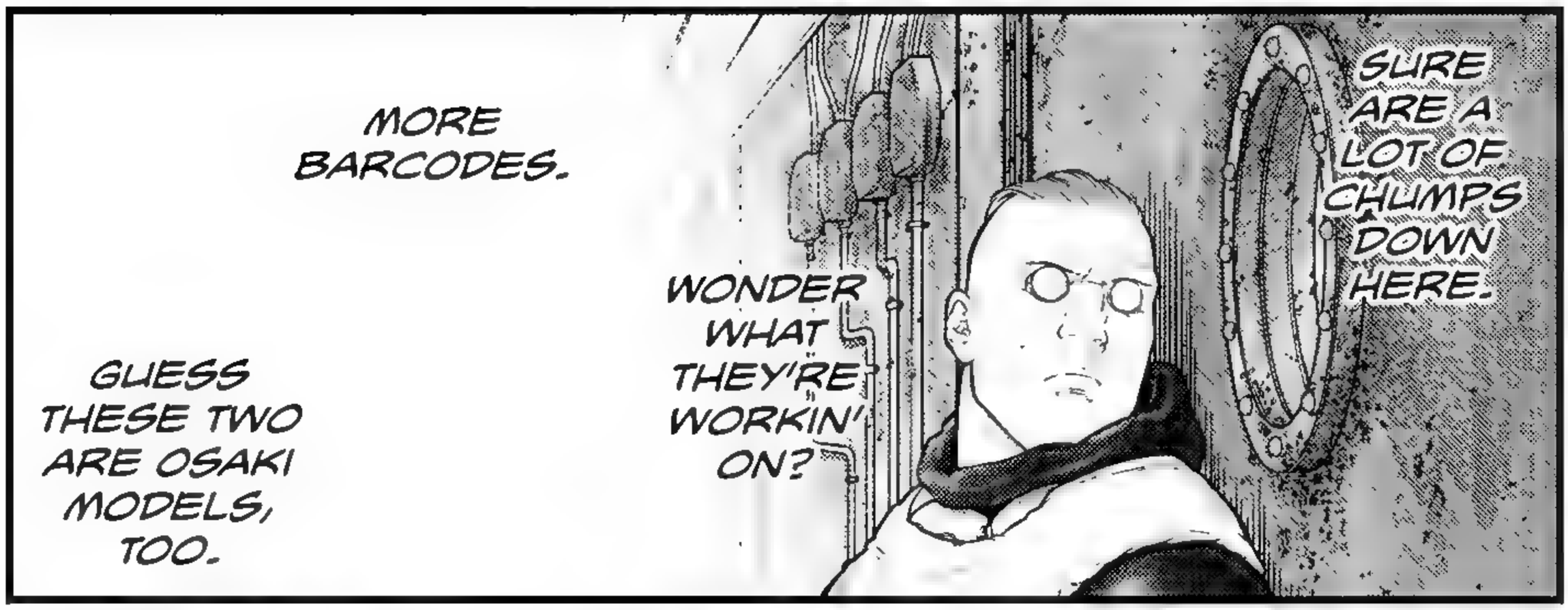
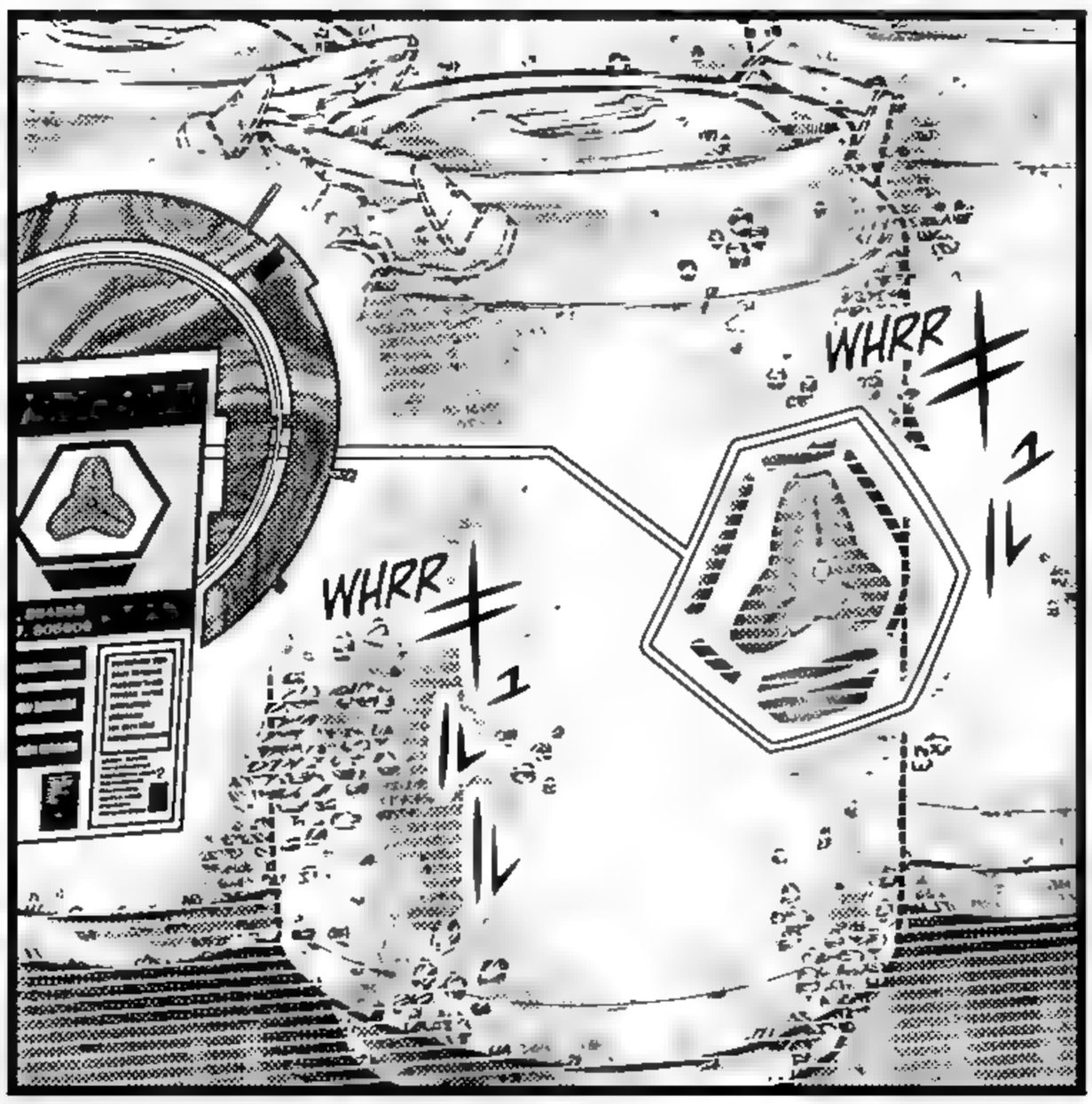
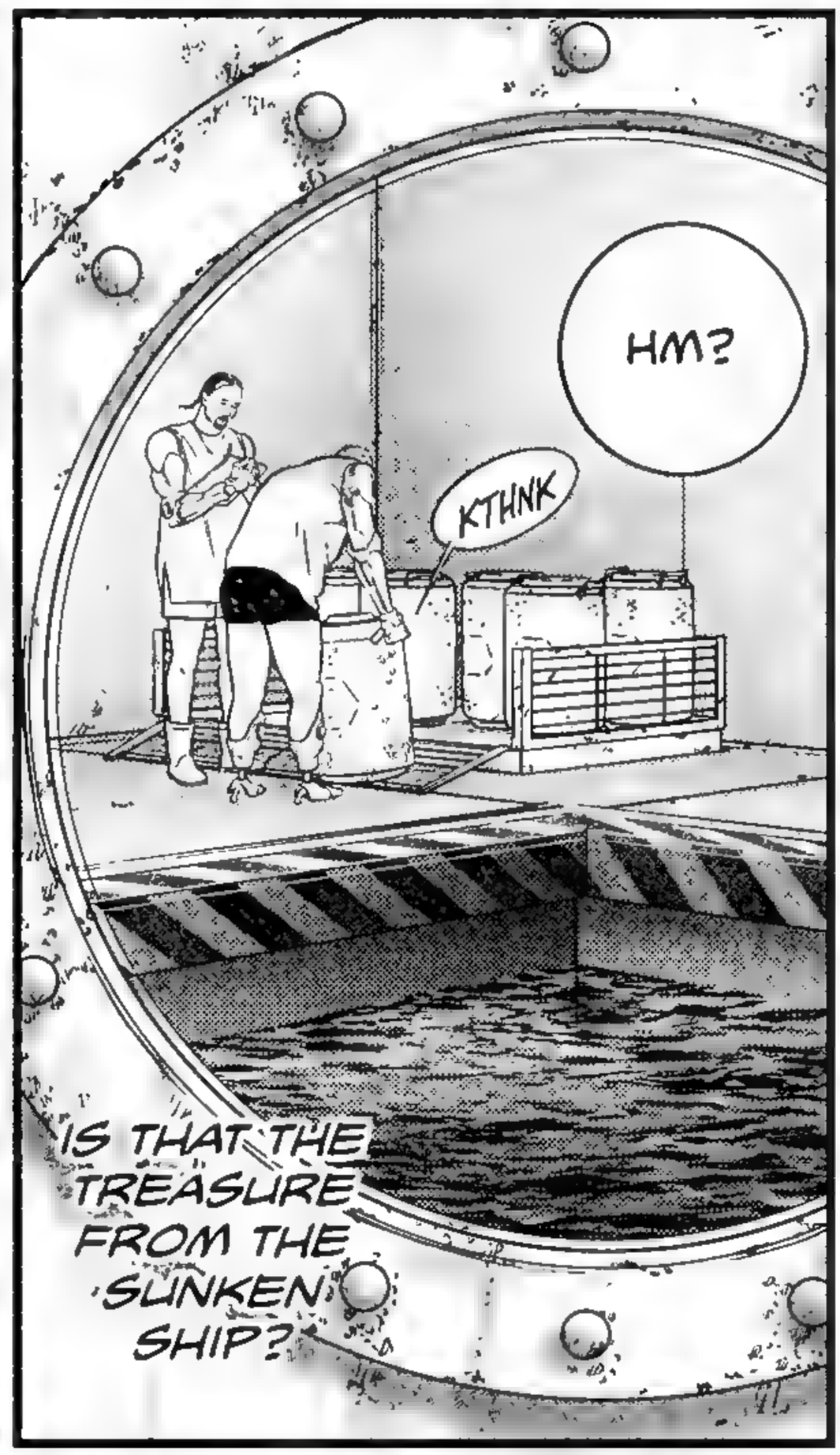



MORE BARCODES.
GUESS THESE TWO ARE OSAKI MODELS, TOO.
WONDER WHAT THEY'RE WORKIN' ON?
SURE ARE A LOT OF CHUMPS DOWN HERE.


WHRR
WHRR


HM?
KTHNK
IS THAT THE TREASURE FROM THE SUNKEN SHIP?

?!
WHOA. I RECOGNIZE THAT LOGO.

...AND YOU SAY...
...IT'S MARKED KENBISHI MATERIALS?

NOT A CHANCE. TOO MANY PEOPLE. I CAN'T RISK GETTING THAT CLOSE.

CAN YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT'S INSIDE?

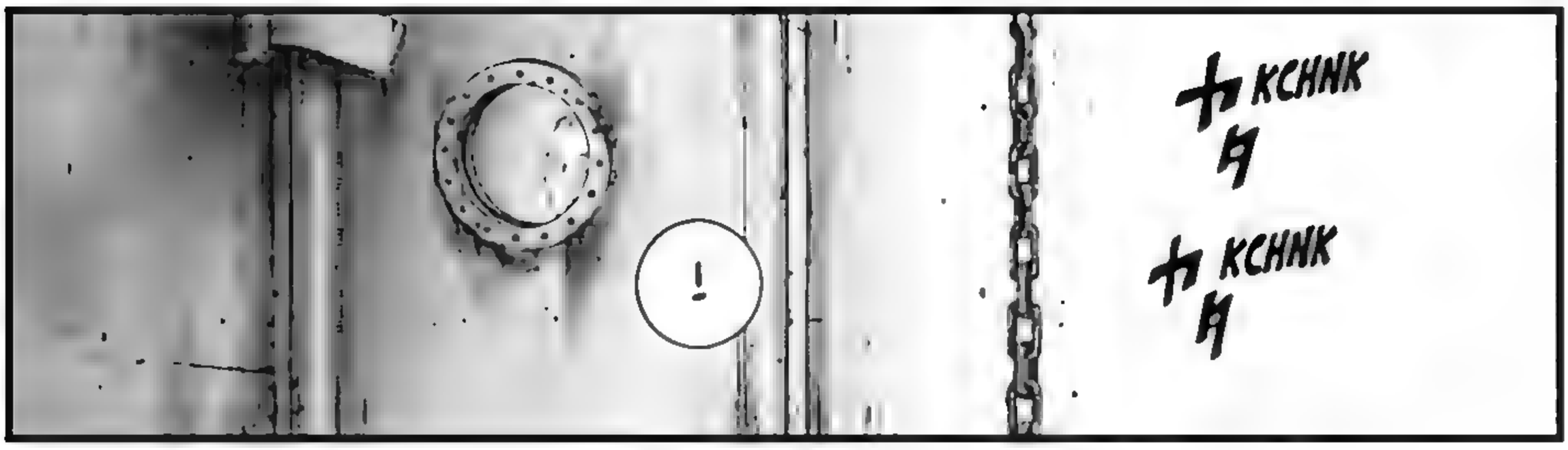
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THAT ON RECORD.

NAH. JUST A PEEPHOLE I KEEP IN PLACE FOR TIMES LIKE THESE.

YOU GOT SOME KINDA HOOKUP?

I'LL START DIGGING THROUGH KENBISHI'S BOOKS.

TSK! FINE. WE'LL LEAVE THAT MYSTERY FOR LATER.



A DEEP-SEA EXOSUIT?

KCHNK

KCHNK...

THIS DEFINITELY GOES BEYOND SUNKEN TREASURE.

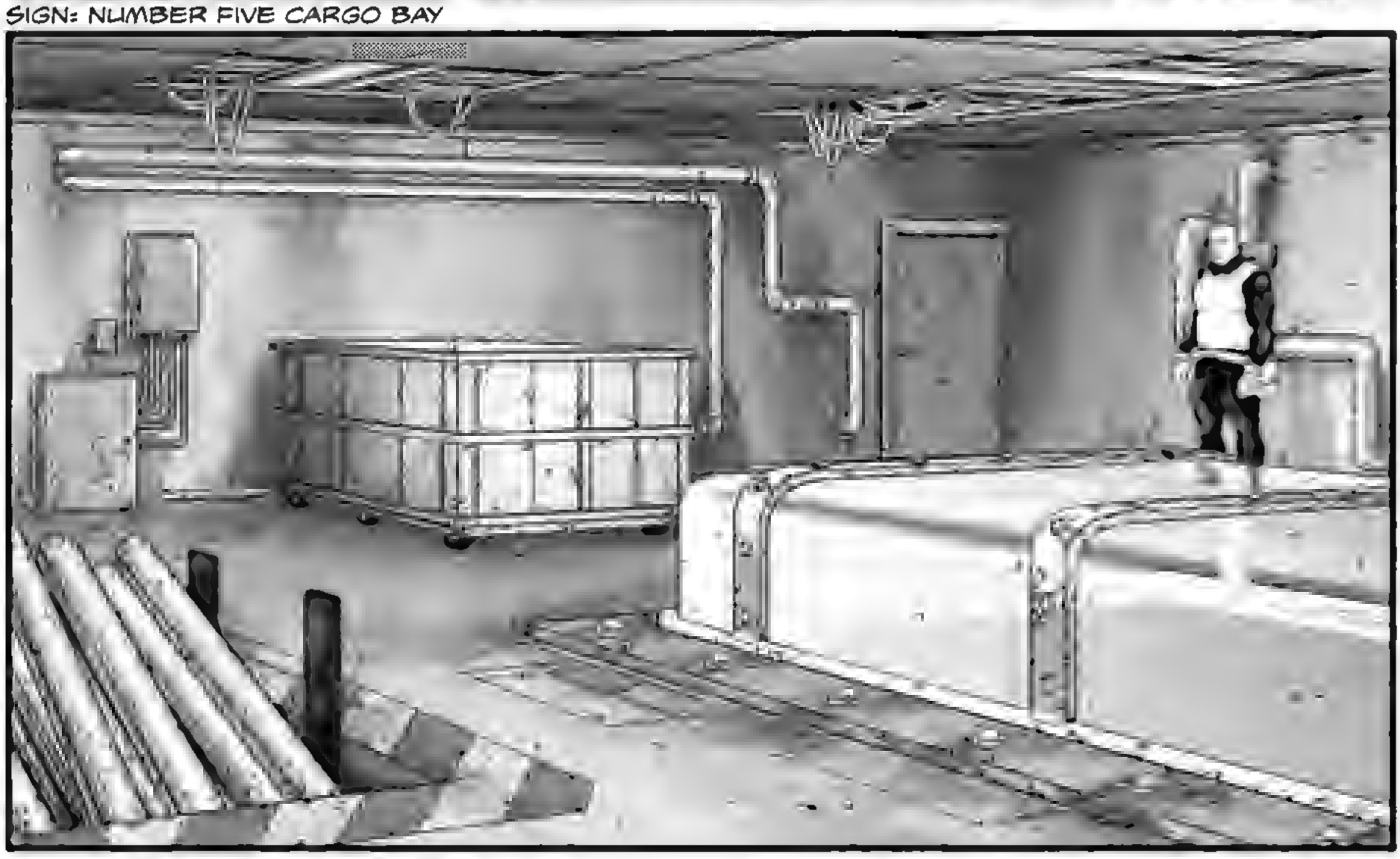
LOOKS LIKE OLD MAN YAMBARU'S SUSPICIONS WERE RIGHT ON THE MONEY.

THE HELL DO THEY NEED WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT LIKE THAT?

AW, HELL...

POOR SAP'S NOT JUST FEELIN' THE RADIATION PHYSICALLY. HIS MIND'S SHOT, TOO.

SIGN: NUMBER FIVE CARGO BAY



USE 'EM TILL THEY BREAK, THEN DUMP 'EM, HUH?

HMPH. PROS-THETICS.

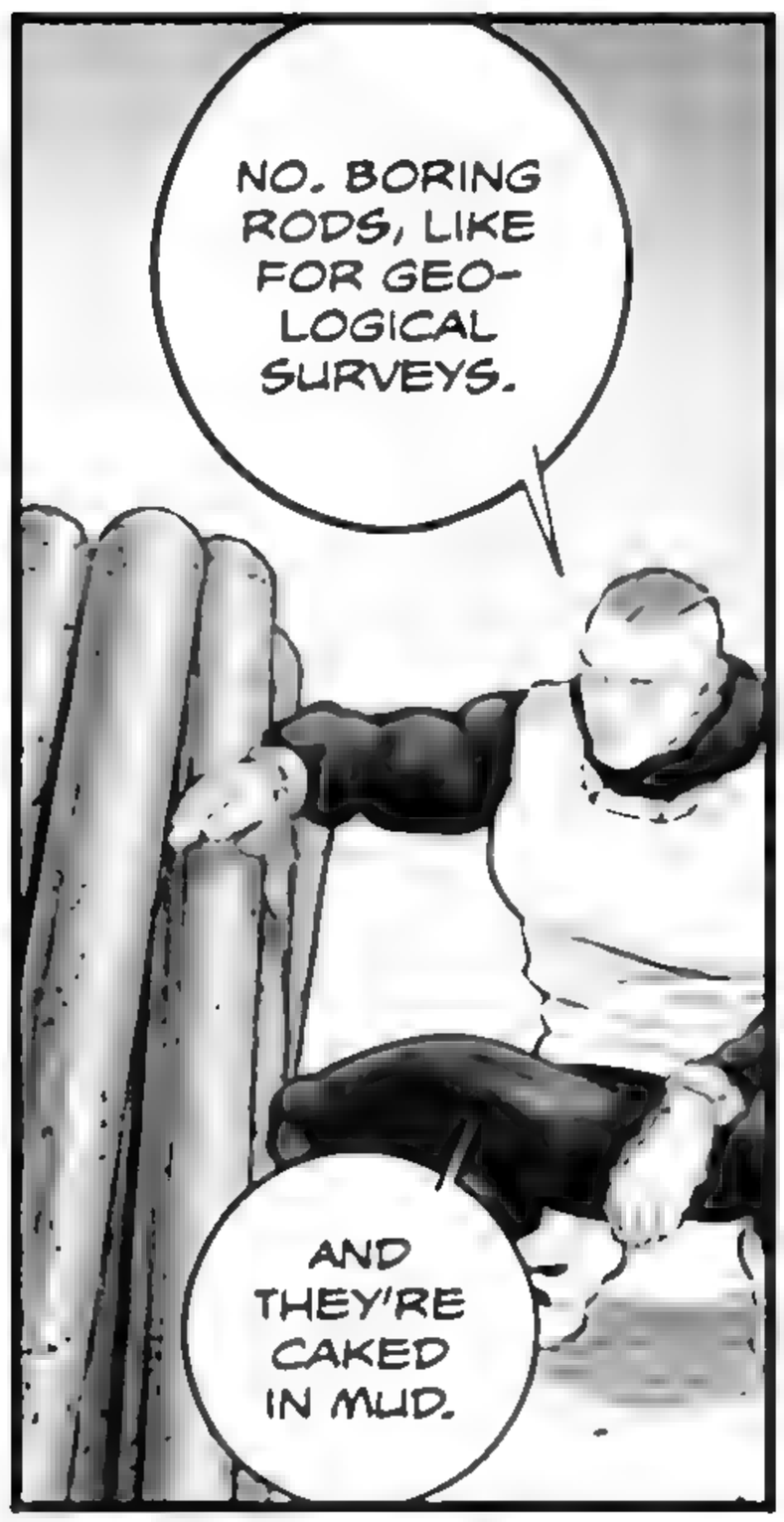
POP THE CYBER-BRAIN OUT AND MOVE ON TO THE NEXT.

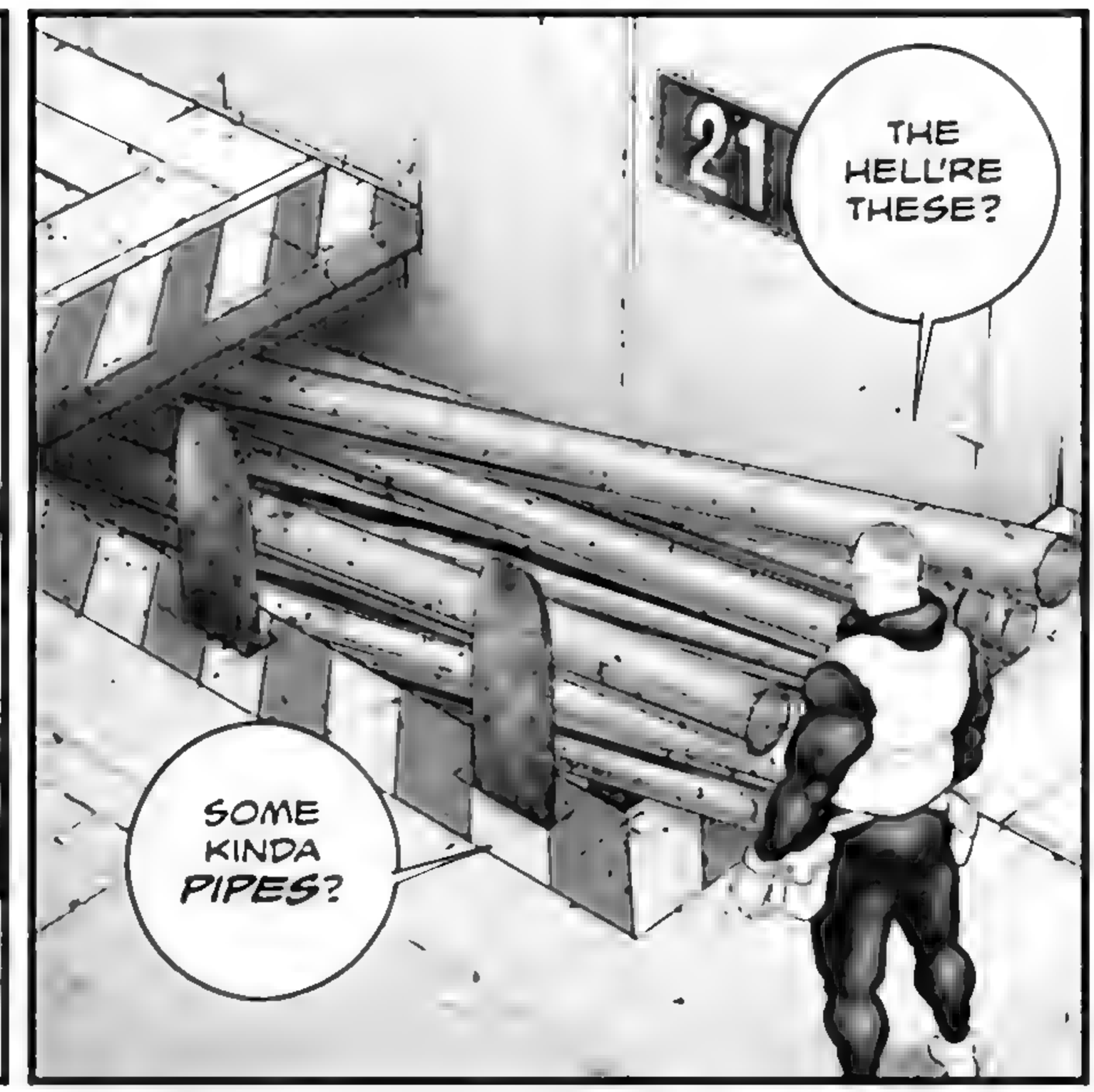
IN FACT, IT'S A LOT LIKE WHAT WE SAW IN THE MAJOR'S—

!

AND THE BUILDUP OF POLLUTANTS IN THE ARTIFICIAL MEMBRANES IS OFF THE CHARTS.

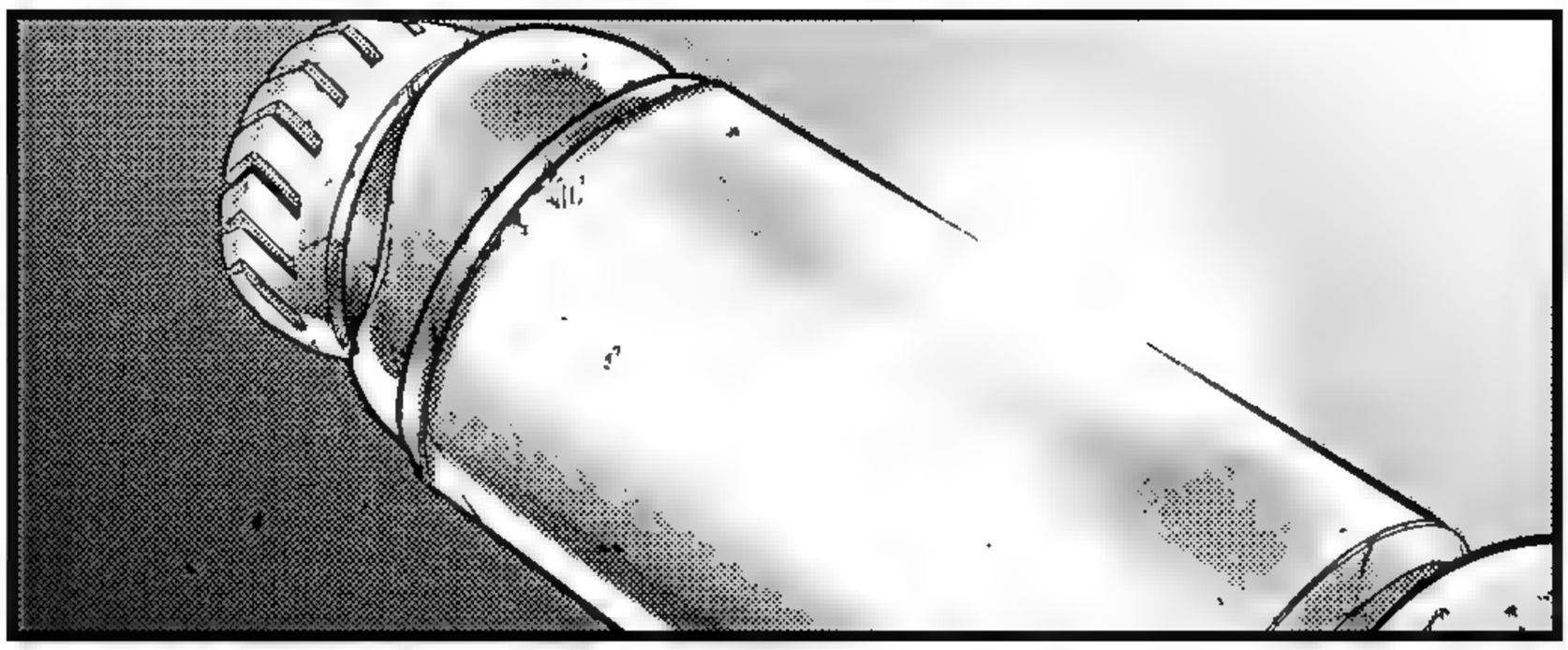
REAL SHODDY CUSTOM-IZATION WORK, TOO.


NO. BORING RODS, LIKE FOR GEO-LOGICAL SURVEYS.
AND THEY'RE CAKED IN MUD.


21
THE HELL'RE THESE?
SOME KINDA PIPES?

ARE THEY DRILLING INTO THE SEABED?
?!

DOES THAT MEAN THEIR REAL TARGET IS...
SHW WWWW



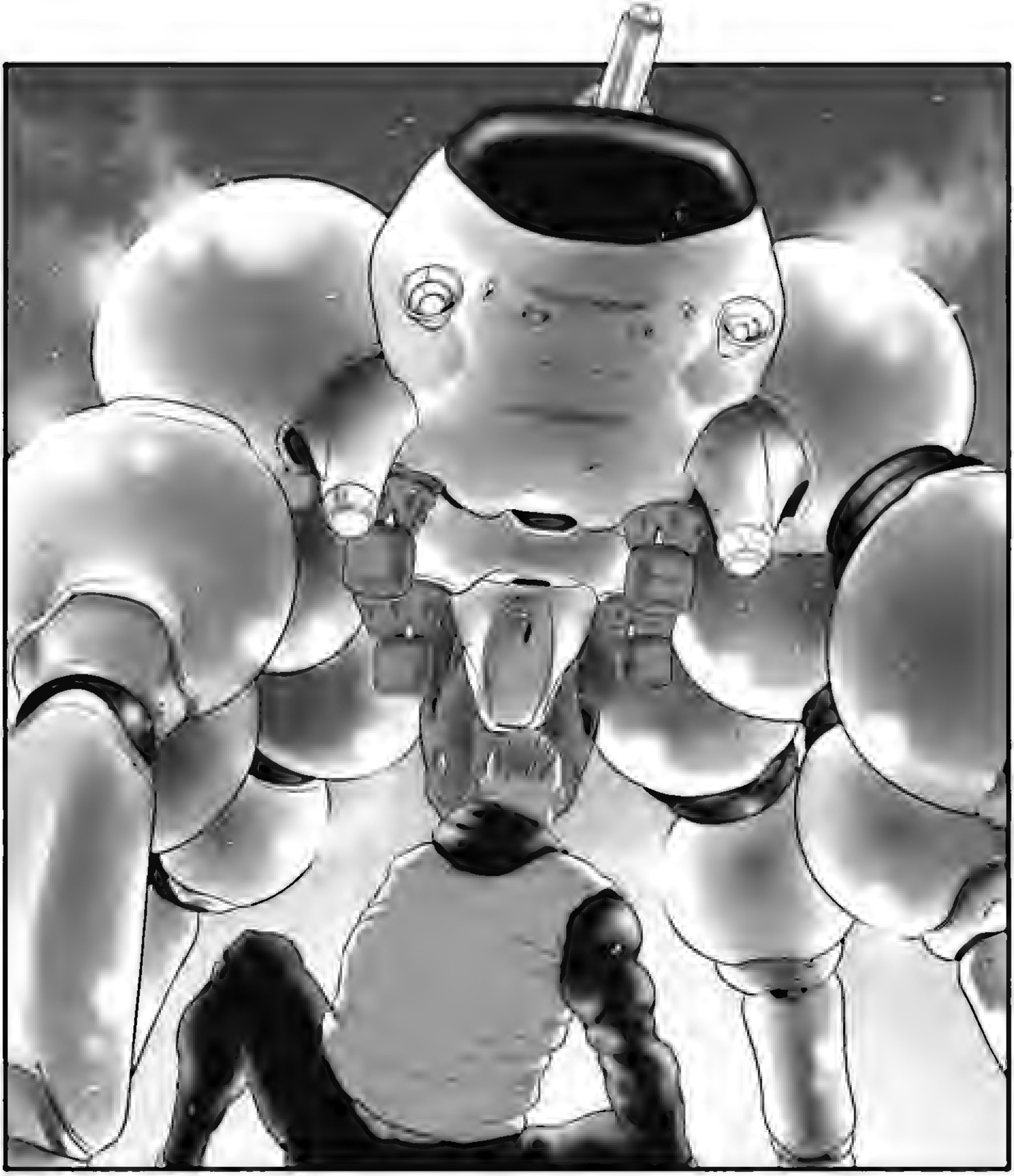
UH... HI?

W
W
W
SH

KA VRAMP

?!

...PROTECT-ING THAT WITNESS AT THE POLICE HOSPITAL!
A DEEP-SEA DIVER MECHA?! LAST TIME I SAW ONE OF THESE WAS WHEN WE WERE...

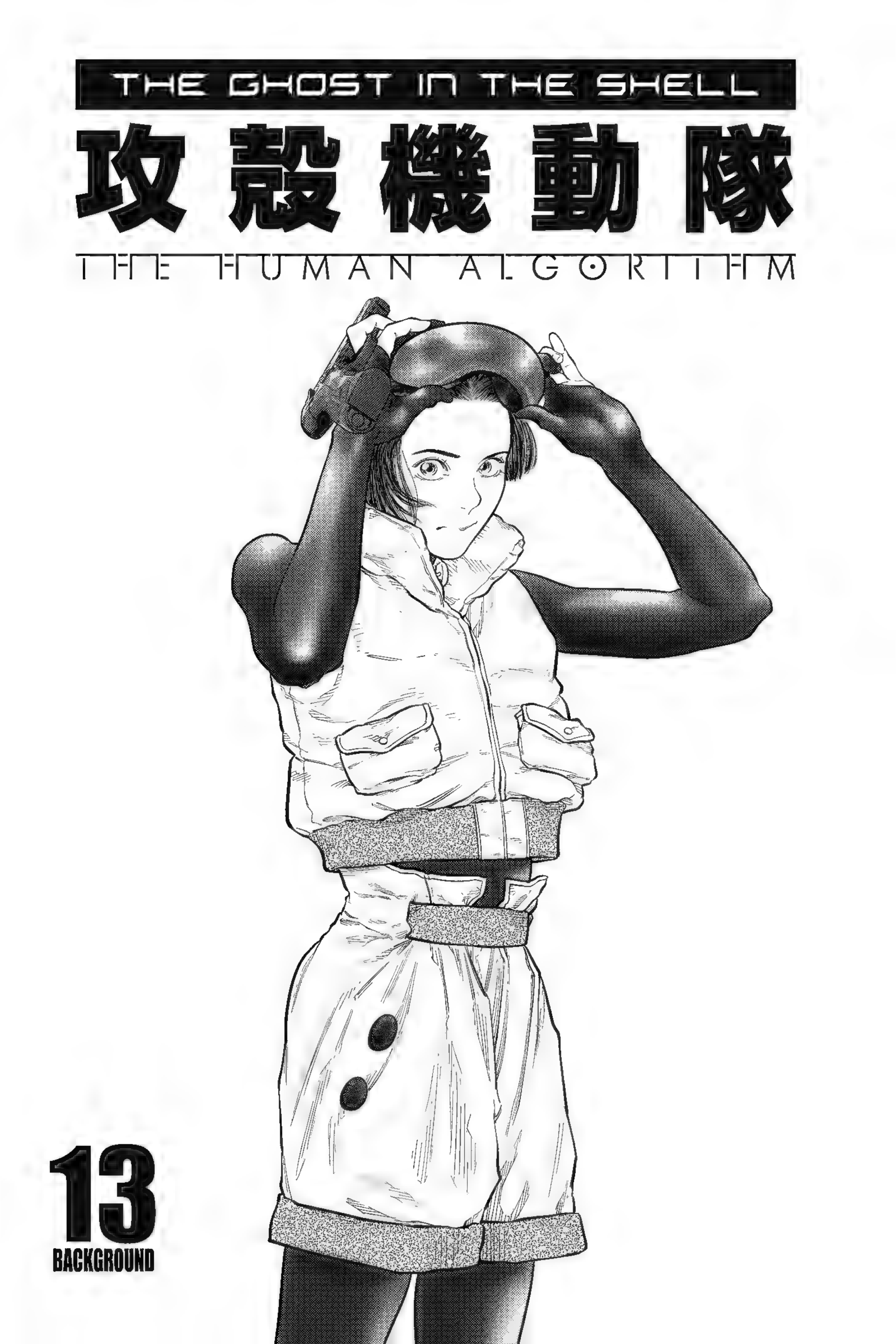


UH... THINK THERE'S A WAY TO CALL THE CAVALRY DOWN HERE?
HEH, HEH...

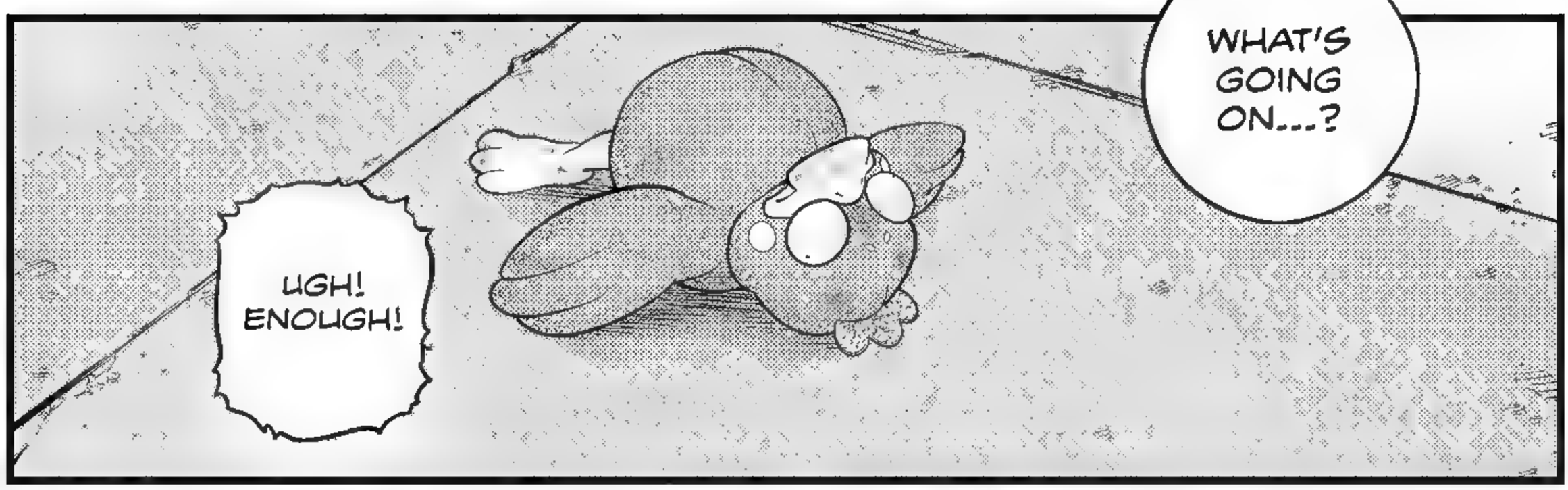
THE GHOST IN THE SHELL

攻殻機動隊

THE HUMAN ALGORITHM



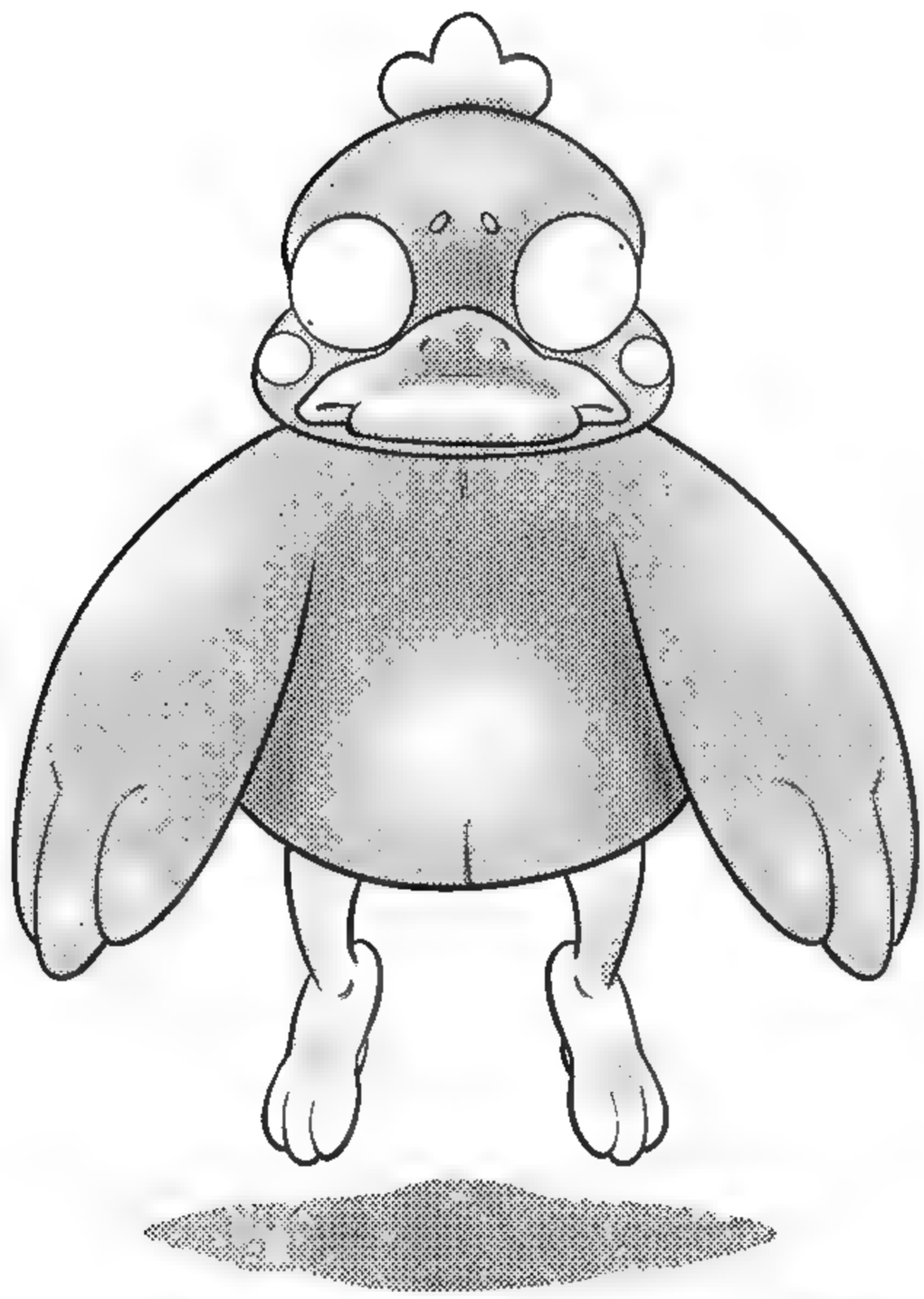
13
BACKGROUND

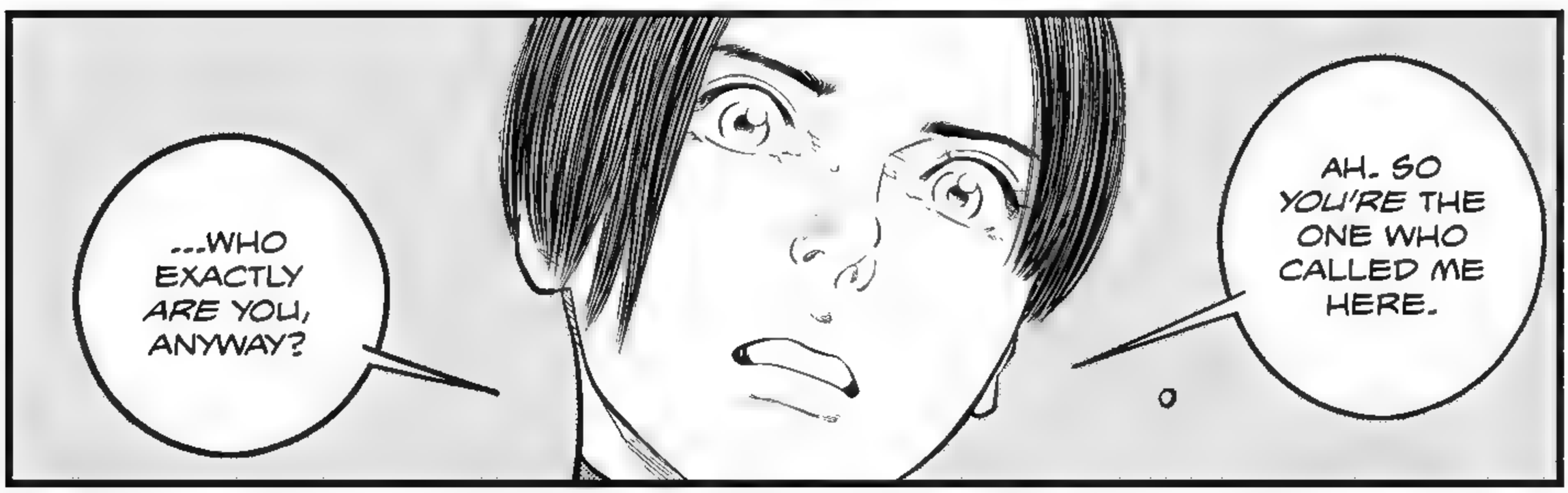

UGH! ENOUGH!
WHAT'S GOING ON...?

AND WHY IN THE WORLD AM I *CRYING*...?
I'M NOT TRYING TO CHANNEL...
...SO WHY DO ALL THESE FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES KEEP FLOODING INTO MY MIND?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA—
TOGUSA...

WOW! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
!




...WHO EXACTLY ARE YOU, ANYWAY?
AH. SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CALLED ME HERE.

I'LL FILL YOU IN ON ALL THE DETAILS.
C'MON. LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND.

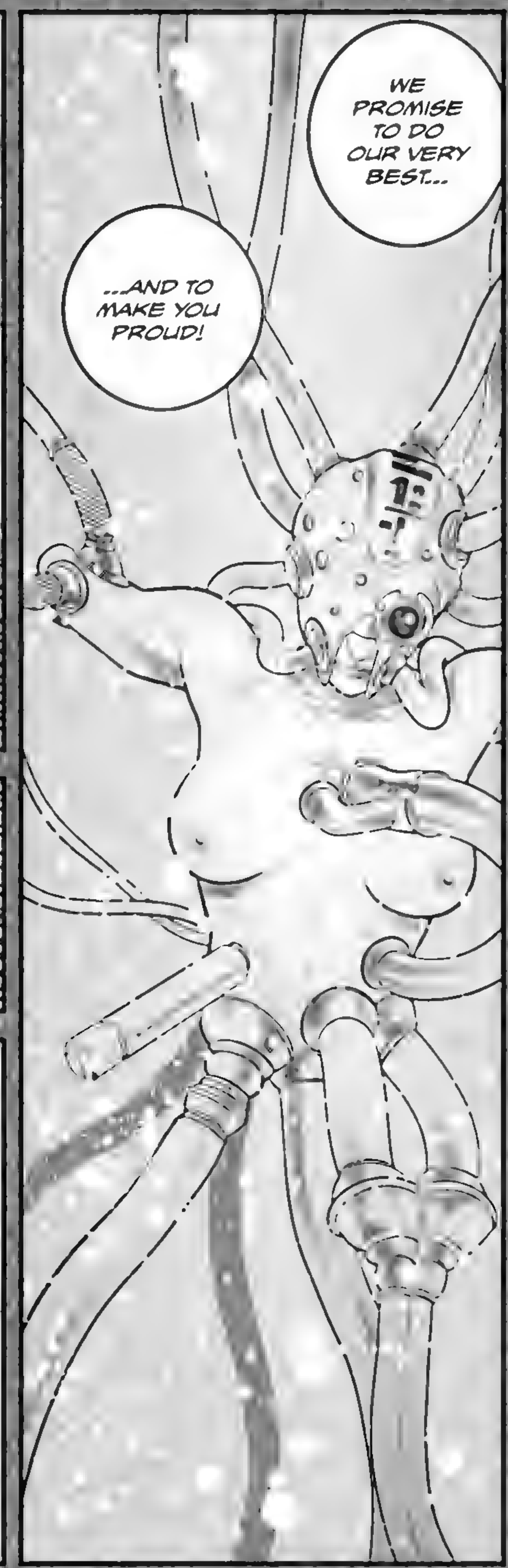
AWW...
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME?
HMM...
LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY'S GOT THE LID TO THE PAST SCREWED ON TIGHT.

BR
RR
RR RR
RING
ECHO
IT'S ANOTHER LOVELY DAY!
GOOD MORNING, MOTHER DEAREST!

HOORAY! HERE WE GO!
WHEE!
WOOT

BUMP
OOF!

ECHO
OUCHE...


WE PROMISE TO DO OUR VERY BEST...
...AND TO MAKE YOU PROUD!

IT'S ANOTHER LOVELY DAY.

GOOD MORNING, MOTHER DEAREST.

WHAP

WHAP

NO!

BAD!

WHAT'S GOING ON?

EEK!

!

WHACK

HE WAS A VERY, VERY NAUGHTY BOY!

WHAP

CLAMOR

BAD BOY!

CLAMOR

WHAP

VERY BAD!

LOOK! BLOOD!

...

WHAT IS IT?

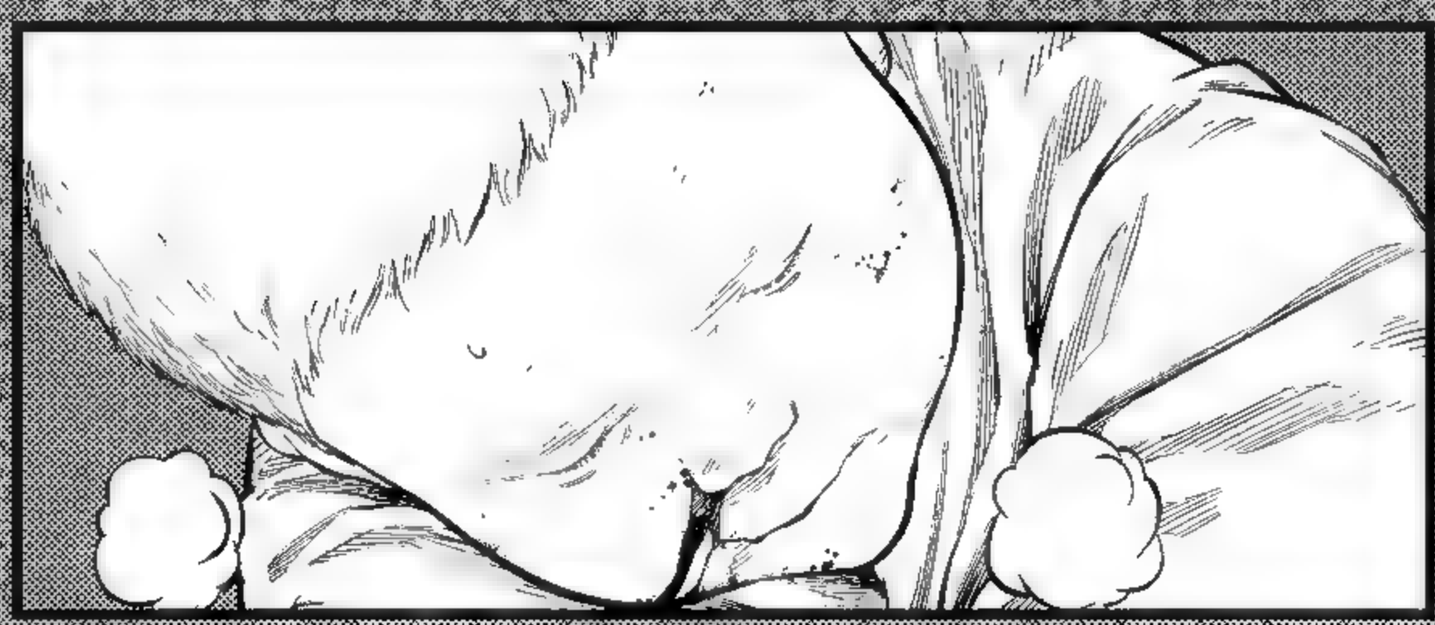
WHAT DID HE DO, DORM MOTHER?

HE TRIED TO SNEAK AWAY WHEN IT WAS TIME TO BE ASLEEP.
HE DID? OH, NO. THAT'S VERY BAD...
HE'S OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER...
LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ALL OF YOU.
REMEMBER, YOU'RE ALL VERY SPECIAL BOYS AND GIRLS.

KOFF!

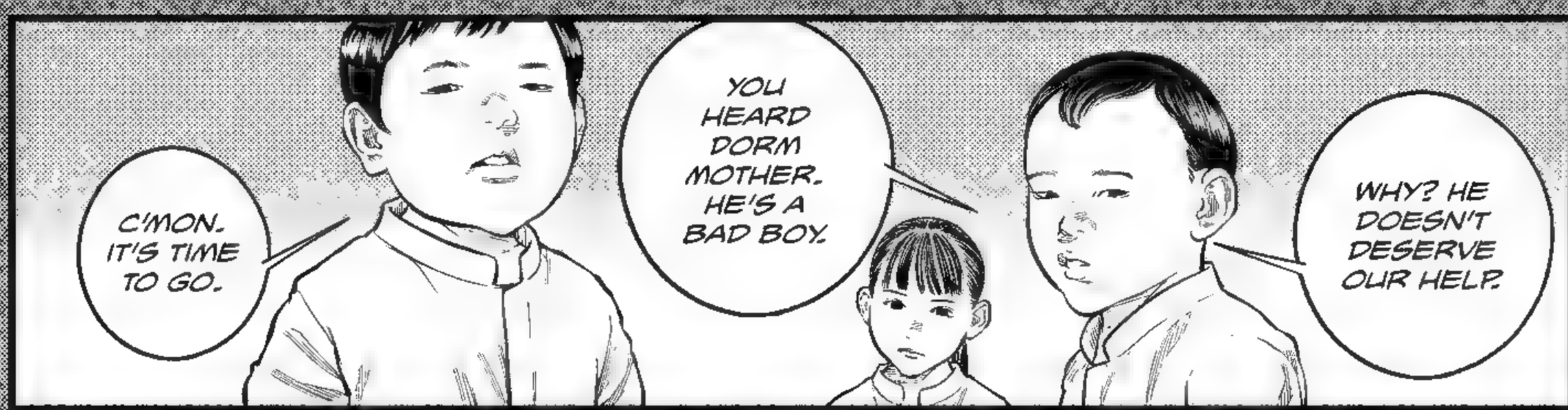
YES, DORM MOTHER. WE PROMISE.

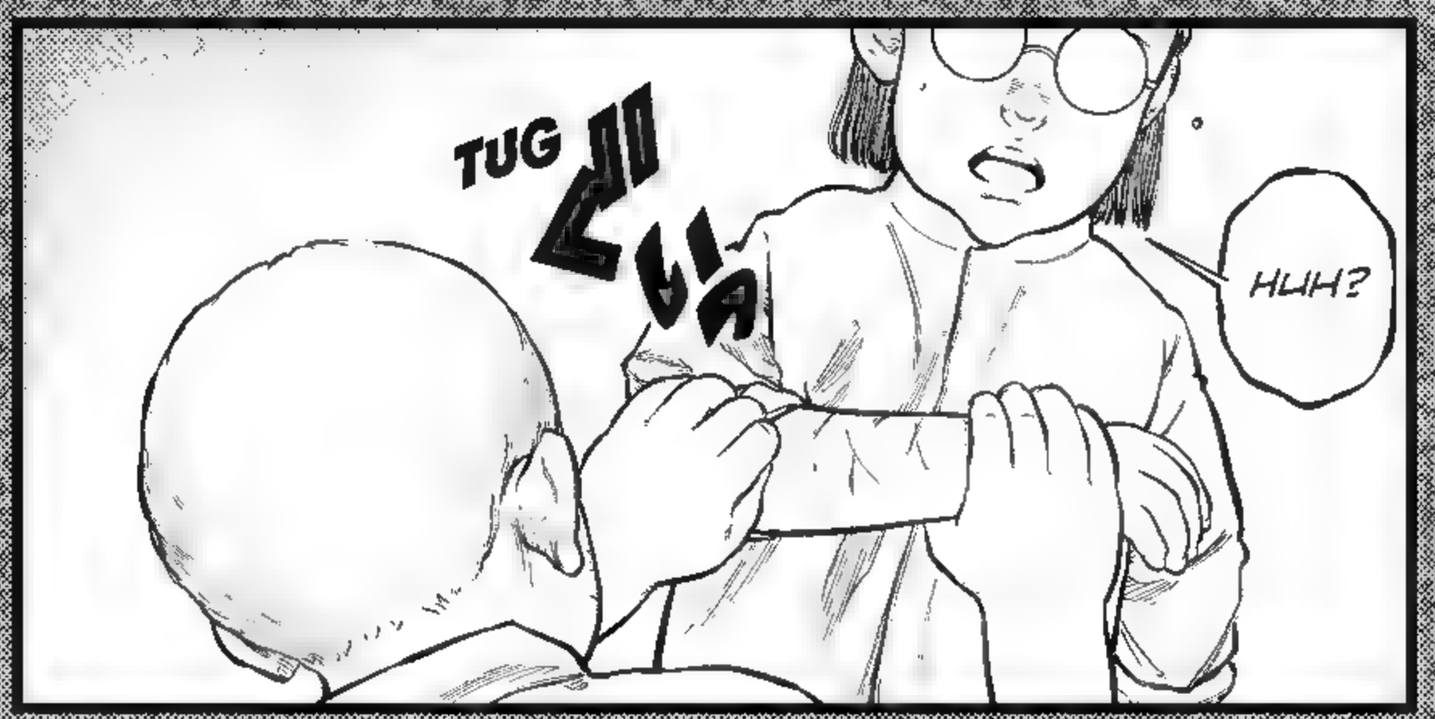
CAN YOU PROMISE ME THAT?
YOU NEED TO STAY HERE AND GROW UP STRONG...
...SO YOU'LL BE READY TO LEAD THE REVOLUTION.

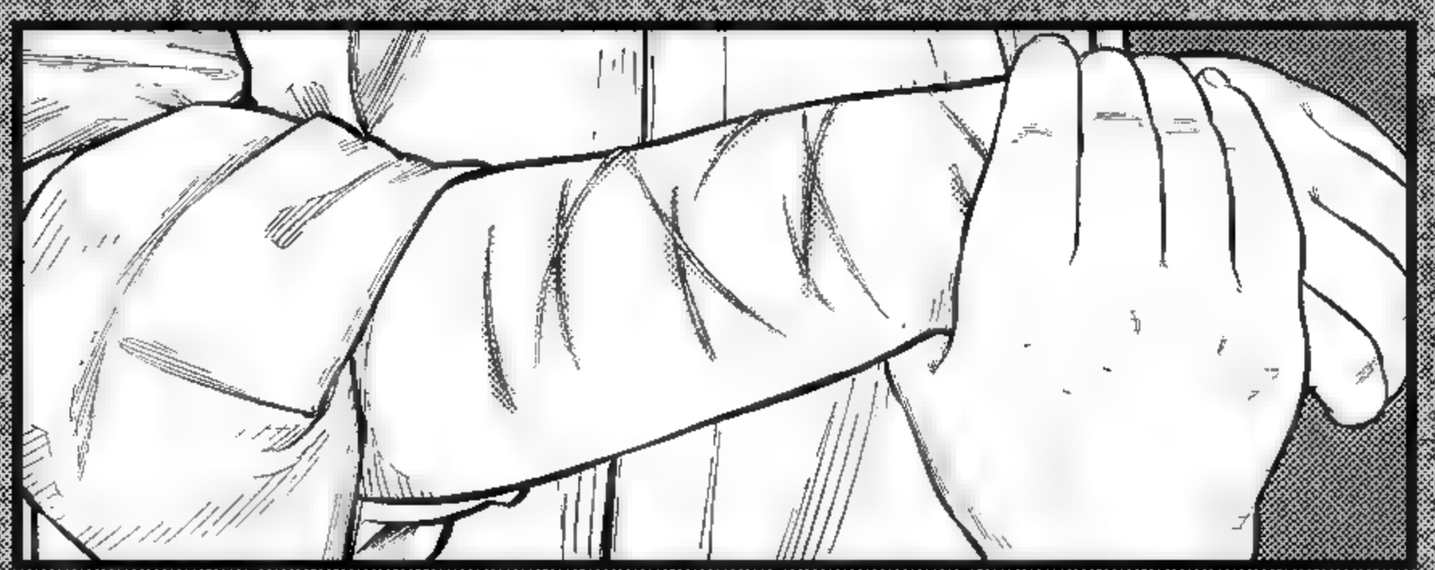


ARE...
ARE YOU OKAY?

WE SHOULD HELP HIM TO HIS BED.
HOLD ON, GUYS. WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS.
H-HEY...


C'MON. IT'S TIME TO GO.
YOU HEARD DORM MOTHER. HE'S A BAD BOY.
WHY? HE DOESN'T DESERVE OUR HELP.


TUG
HUH?



WAIT! DON'T LEAVE!
HE WASN'T ACTUALLY TRYING TO RUN AWAY!
HE WAS GETTING OINT-MENT FOR MY—
GRAB
!

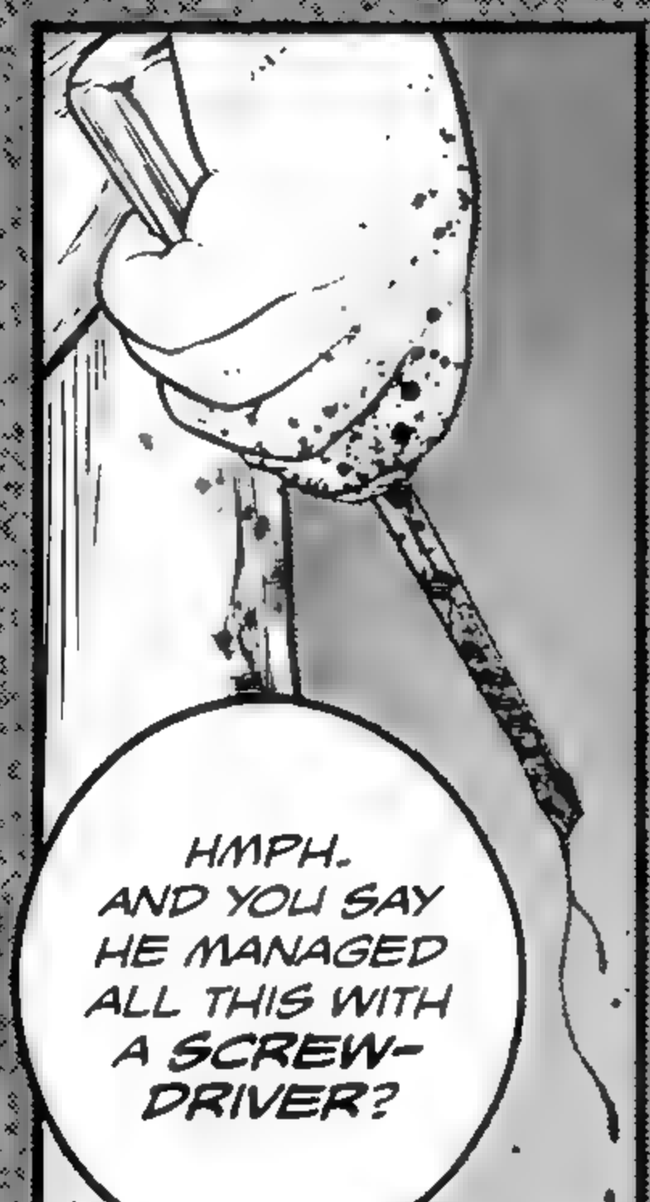
...IT'S NOT AS BAD NOW. IT'S BEEN TWO WHOLE DAYS...

...SINCE DORM MOTHER'S LASHING. THE SWELLING'S STARTING TO GO DOWN.

DOES IT...

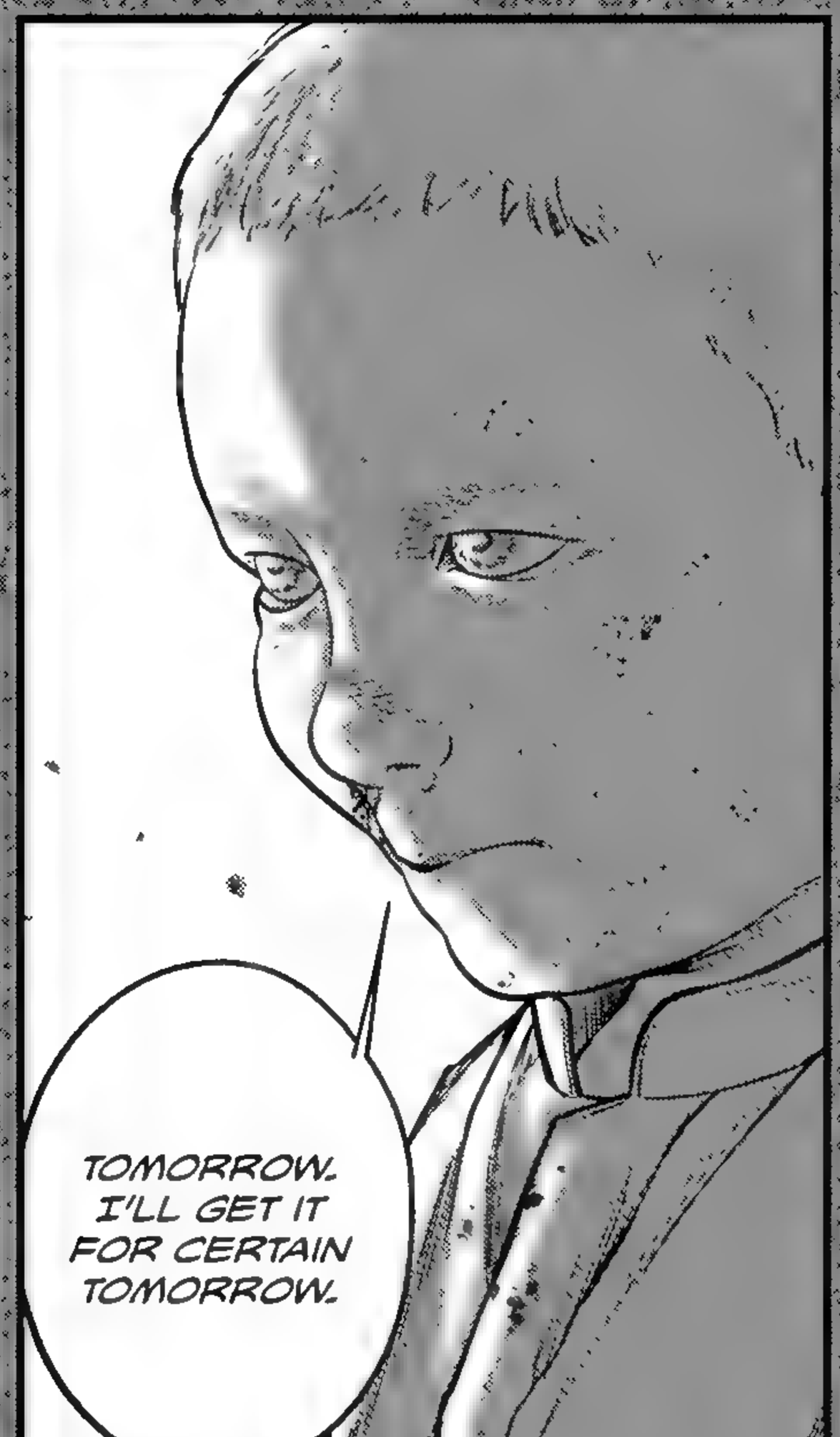
...STILL HURT?

—HERE WE GO. THIS IS THE SUR-VEILLANCE FOOTAGE FROM LAST NIGHT.



HMPH. AND YOU SAY HE MANAGED ALL THIS WITH A SCREW-DRIVER?

HEADS UP— IT'S PRETTY GRAPHIC.

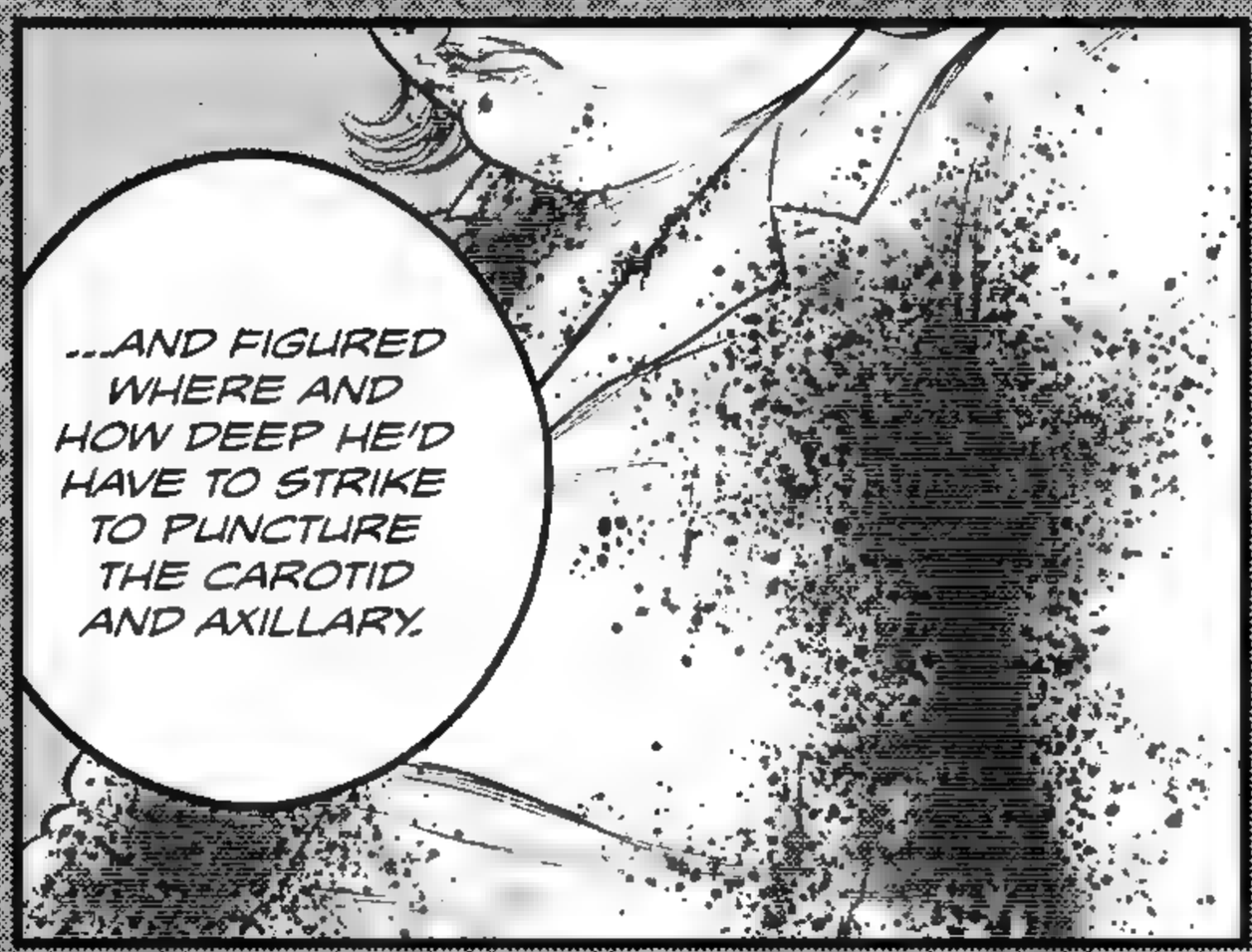


TOMORROW. I'LL GET IT FOR CERTAIN TOMORROW.

DID YOU TAKE A LOOK AT THESE STAB WOUNDS?

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT... CAUSE OF DEATH IS SEVERE BLOOD LOSS DUE TO SHARP FORCE INJURY.

ARE YOU KIDDING? THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH.



I WANNA SHAKE THIS KID'S HAND!

IT'S DAMN FINE WORK.

YEAH! HE'S JUST A CHILD, AND HERE HE IS **MURDERING** THE DORM MOTHER IN COLD BLOOD!

AND HE'S ONE OF THE **YOUNGER** ONES!

HM?

MR. HASHIKAMI, PLEASE. I DON'T THINK THIS IS...

...SOME-THING TO TAKE LIGHTLY.

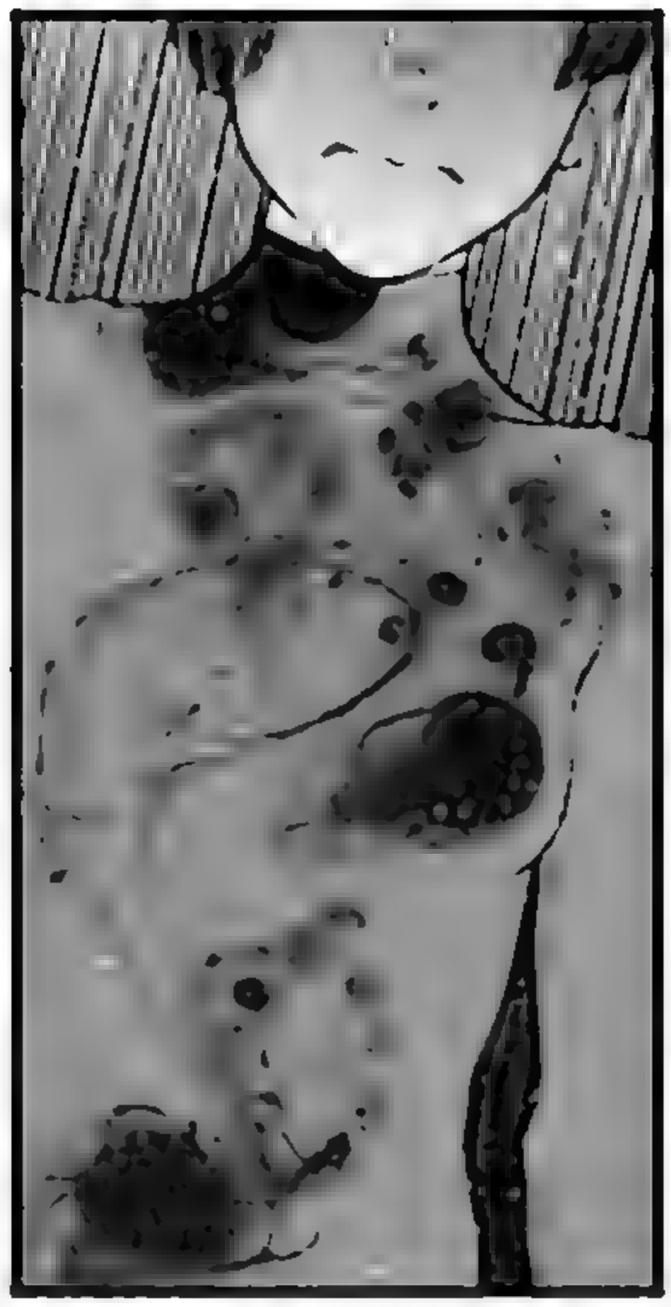
HE EMBODIES EVERYTHING WE'RE AFTER. THIS IS **PRECISELY** WHAT YOMOTSU ASPIRES TO CREATE!

NOT TO MENTION, IT WAS OVER A TUBE OF **OINTMENT** FOR HIS FRIEND...

HUH?

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY IT!

THESE MEMORIES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH ME!
WHY ARE YOU SHOWING ME THIS?!



ARE YOU SURE? DON'T TELL ME YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED HOW *FAMILIAR* THIS PLACE FEELS.

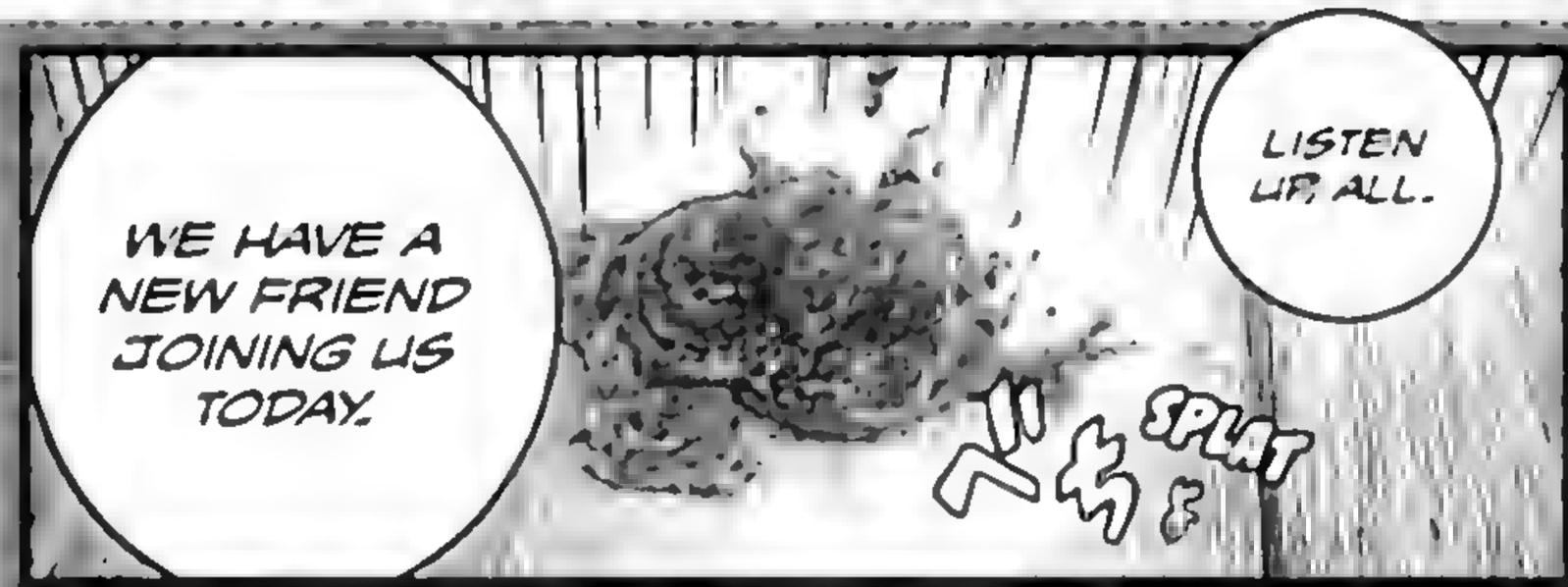
DON'T YOU REMEMBER THAT DAY YOU AND I SHARED A JAR OF YUMMY STRAWBERRY JAM?
?!

N... NO. YOU'RE WRONG.
WH-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?!
LET'S LOOSEN THAT LID A SMIDGE AND SEE WHAT'S INSIDE.

RIGHT HERE IN OUR HOME SWEET HOME.

SPLRP...

THAT'S RIGHT. WELCOME BACK, LITTLE TSUNAGI.



EVERYONE, THIS IS TSUNAGI.

?!

SHUDDER

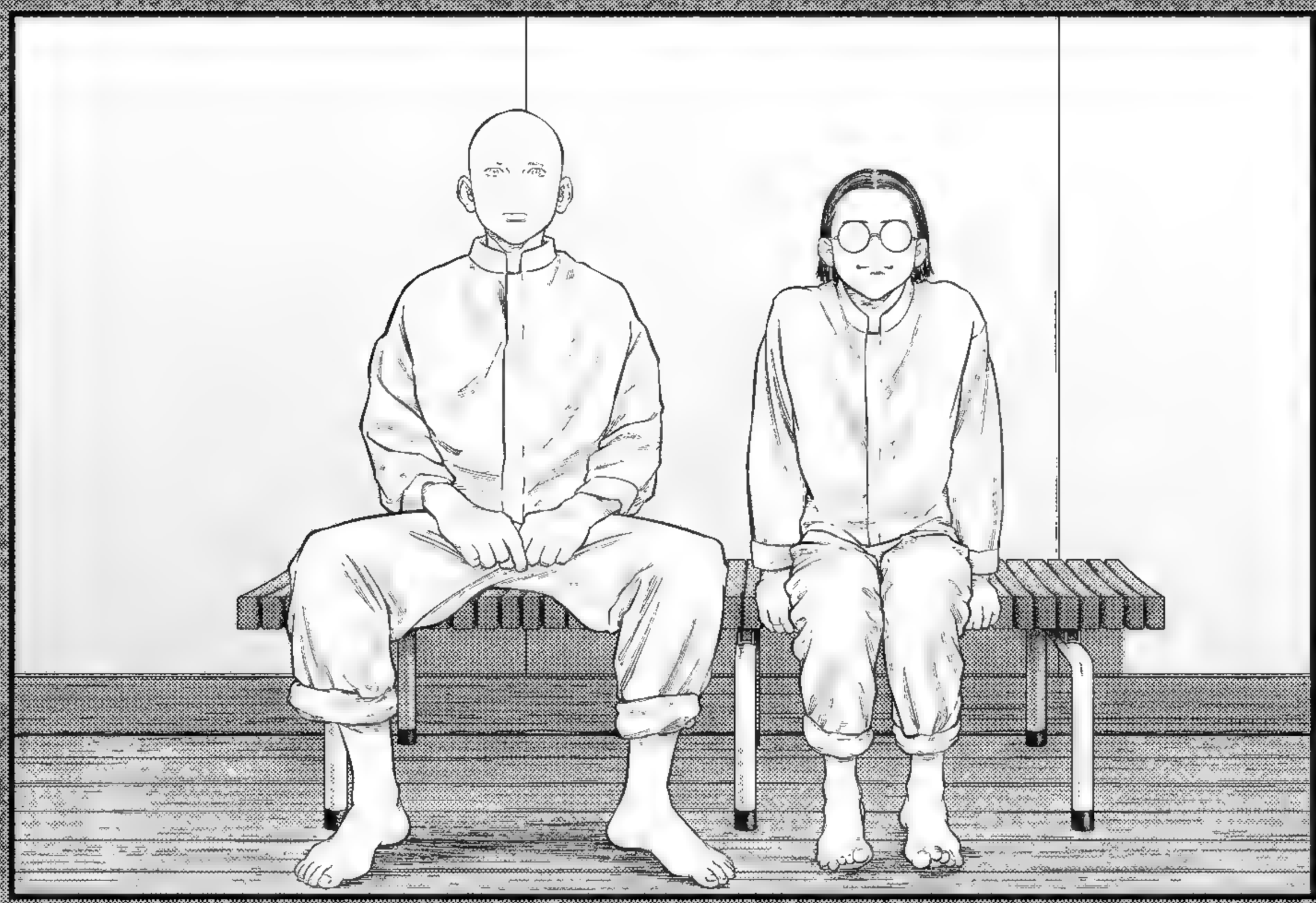
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, BOYS?

THOSE TWO IN THE BACK ARE THE OLDEST. THEY'LL LOOK AFTER YOU.

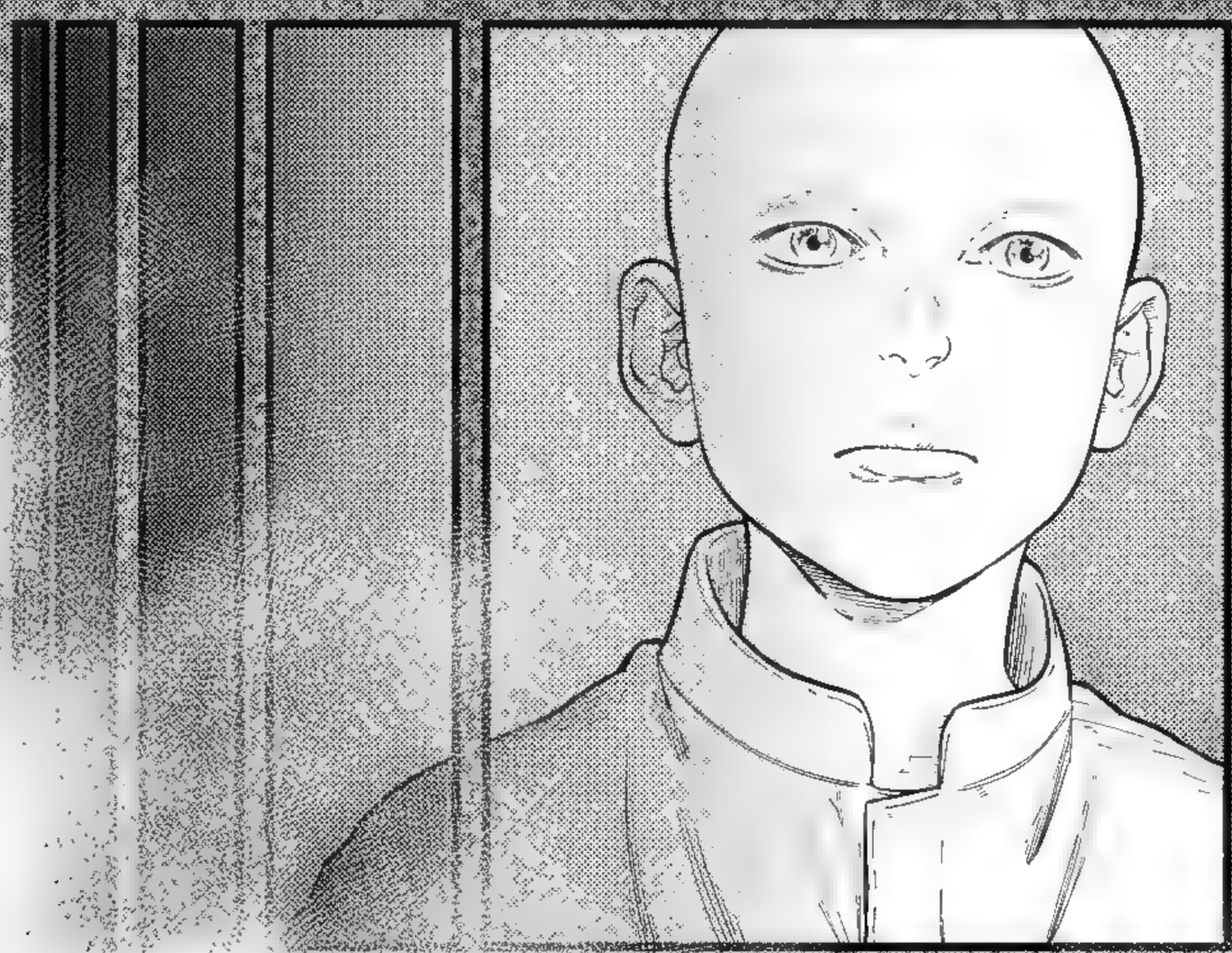
YOU'LL BE GETTING ALONG BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!

YOMOTSU ONLY HAS GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS. THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SHY.

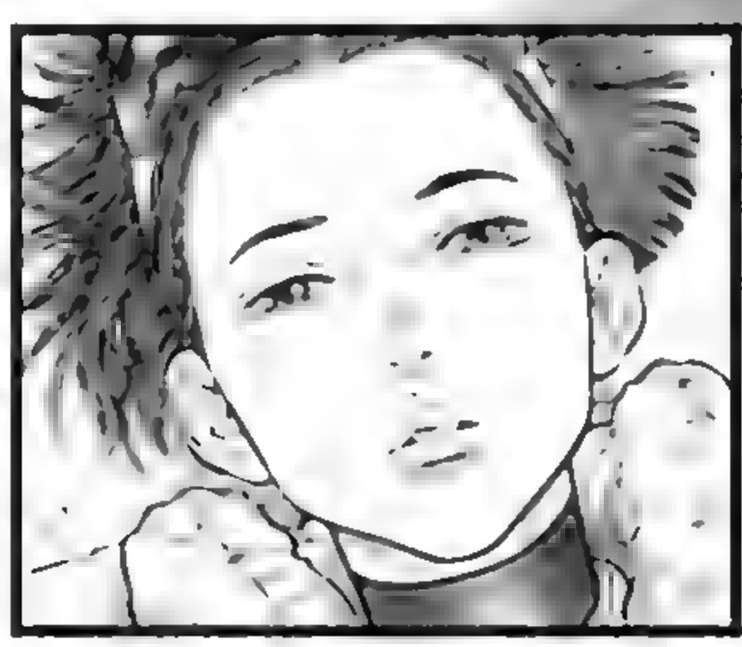
SEE? NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

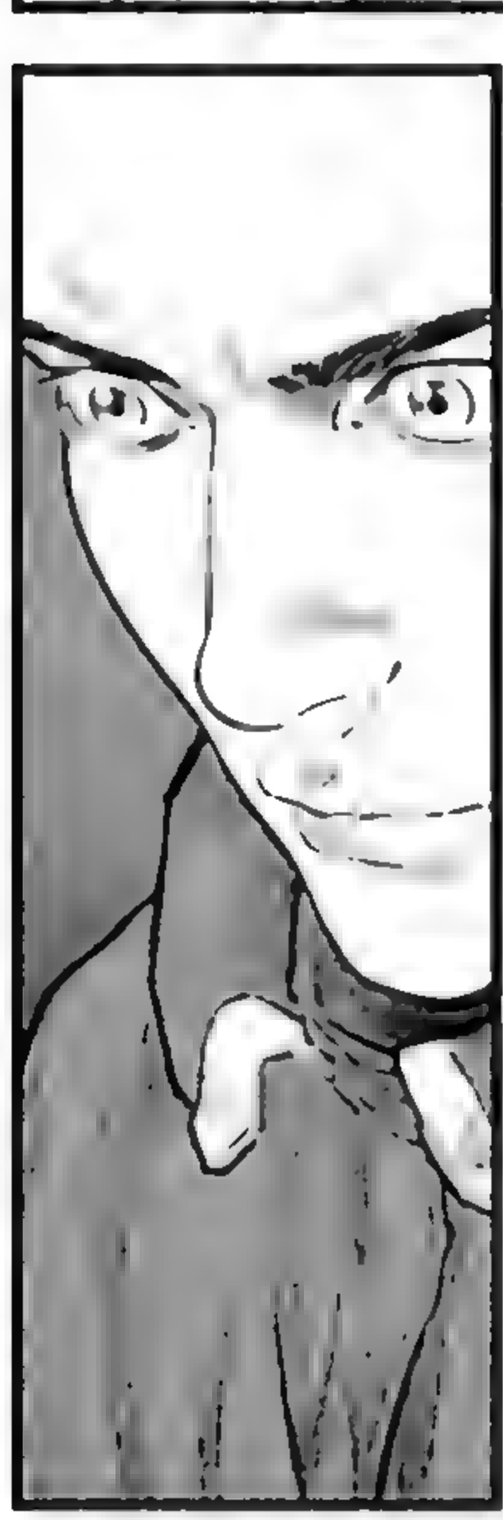


NICE TO MEET YOU.

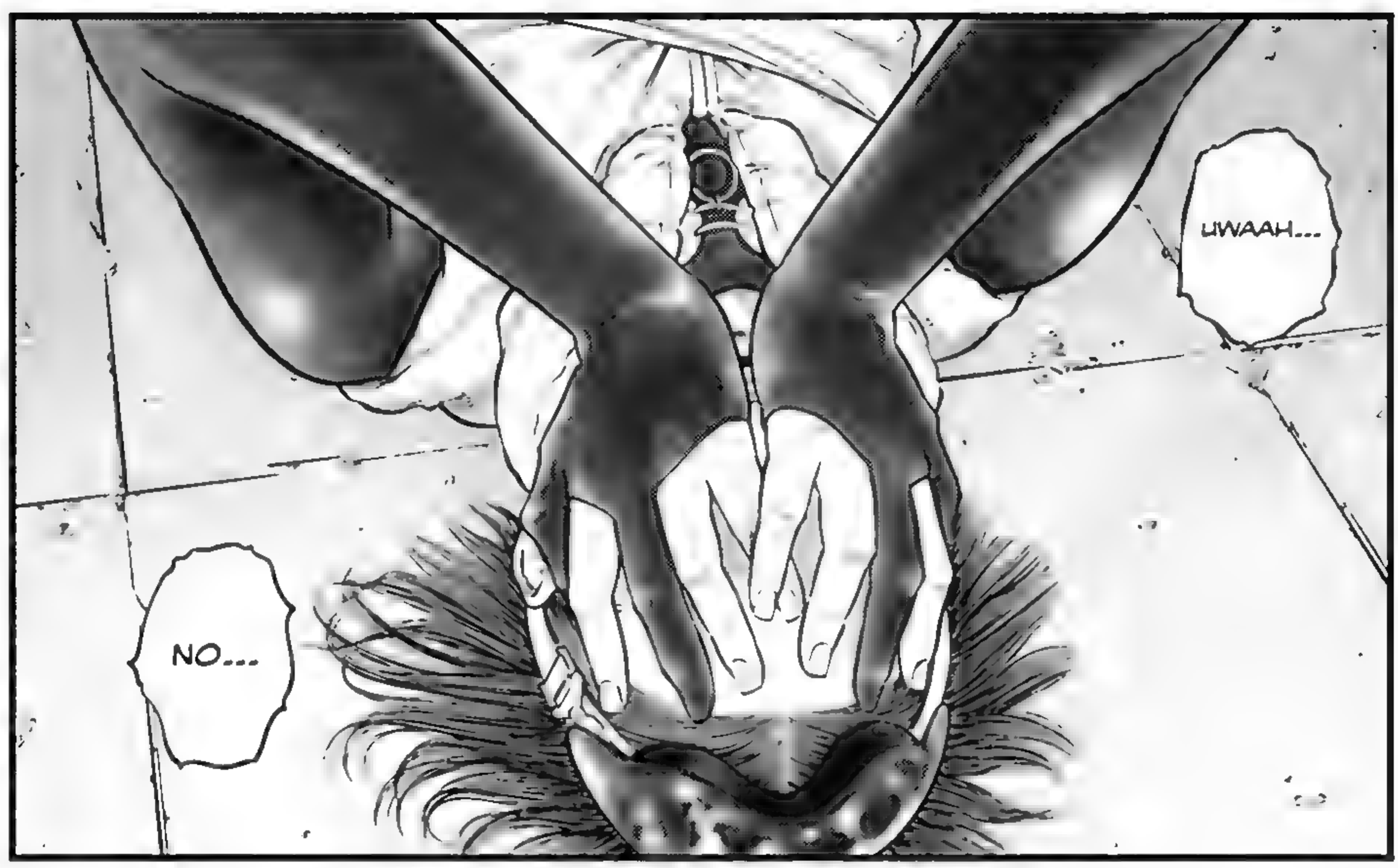


...WHEN YOU COLLAPSED LIKE THAT.
YOU SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME...
HEY!
TSUNAGI! ARE YOU AWAKE?!
WHAT HAPPENED?!

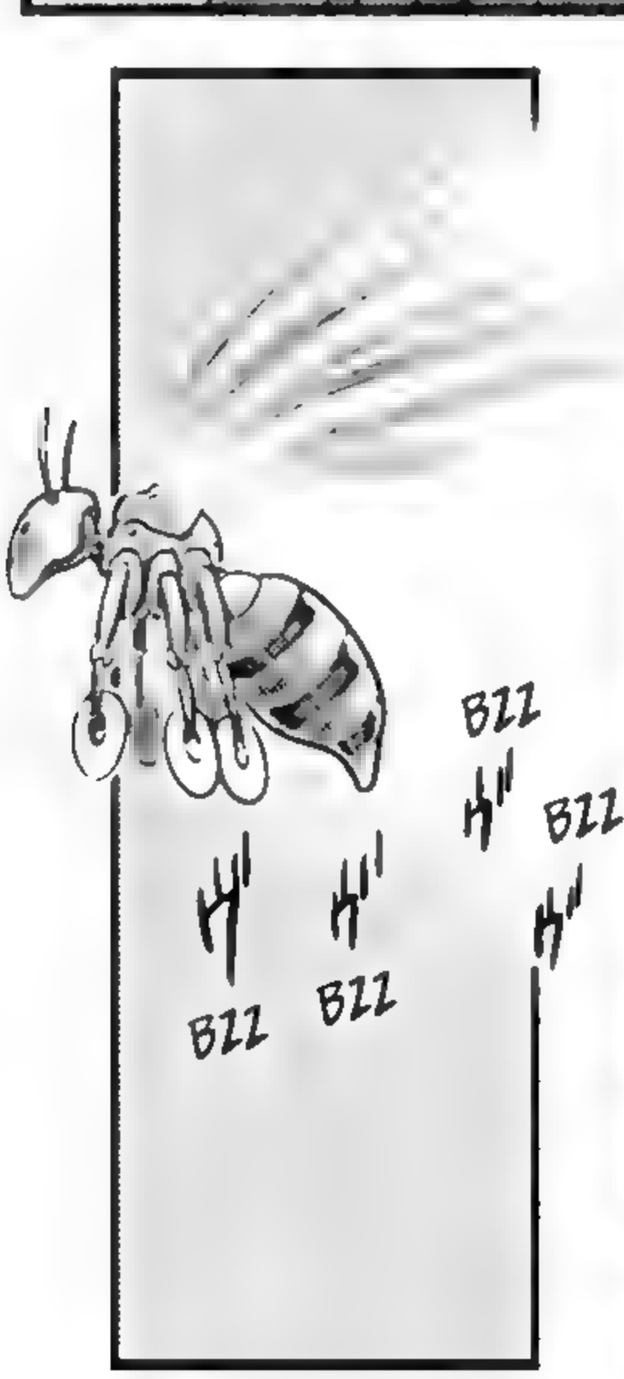




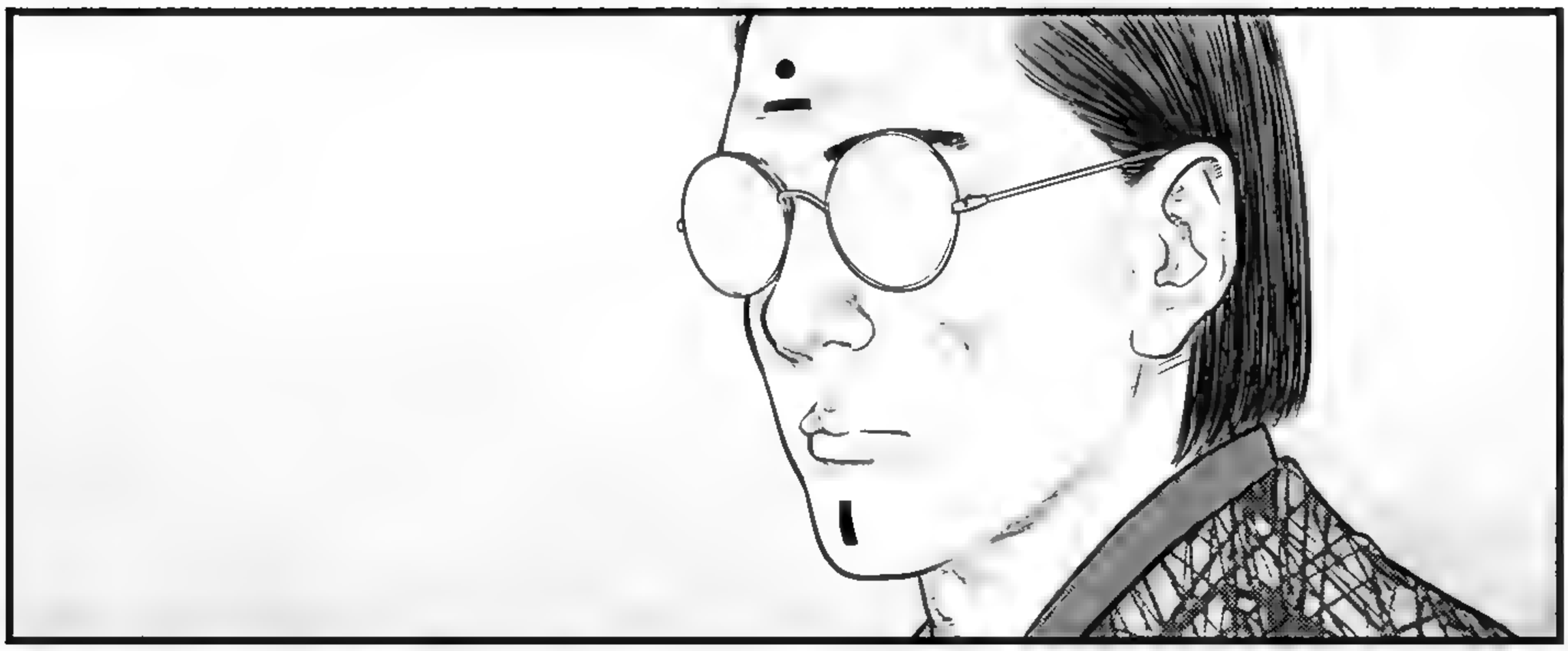
"SNIFF"
"SNIFF"
WAA-AH...

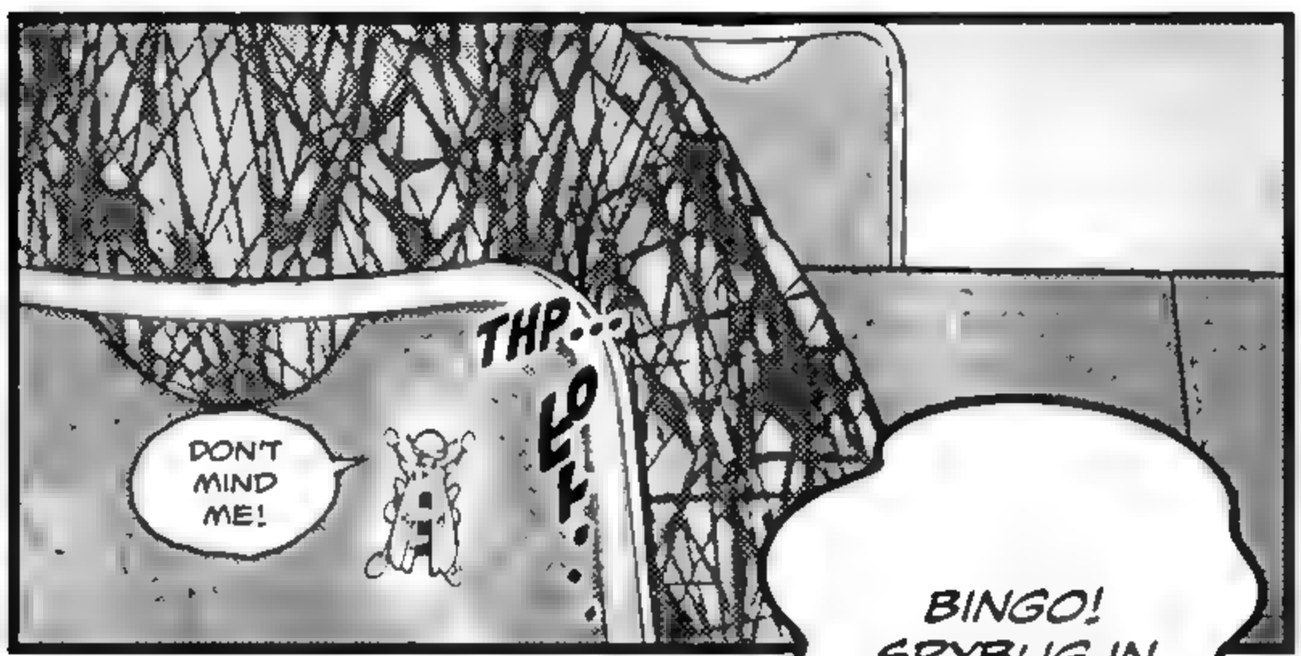

NO...
UWAAH...

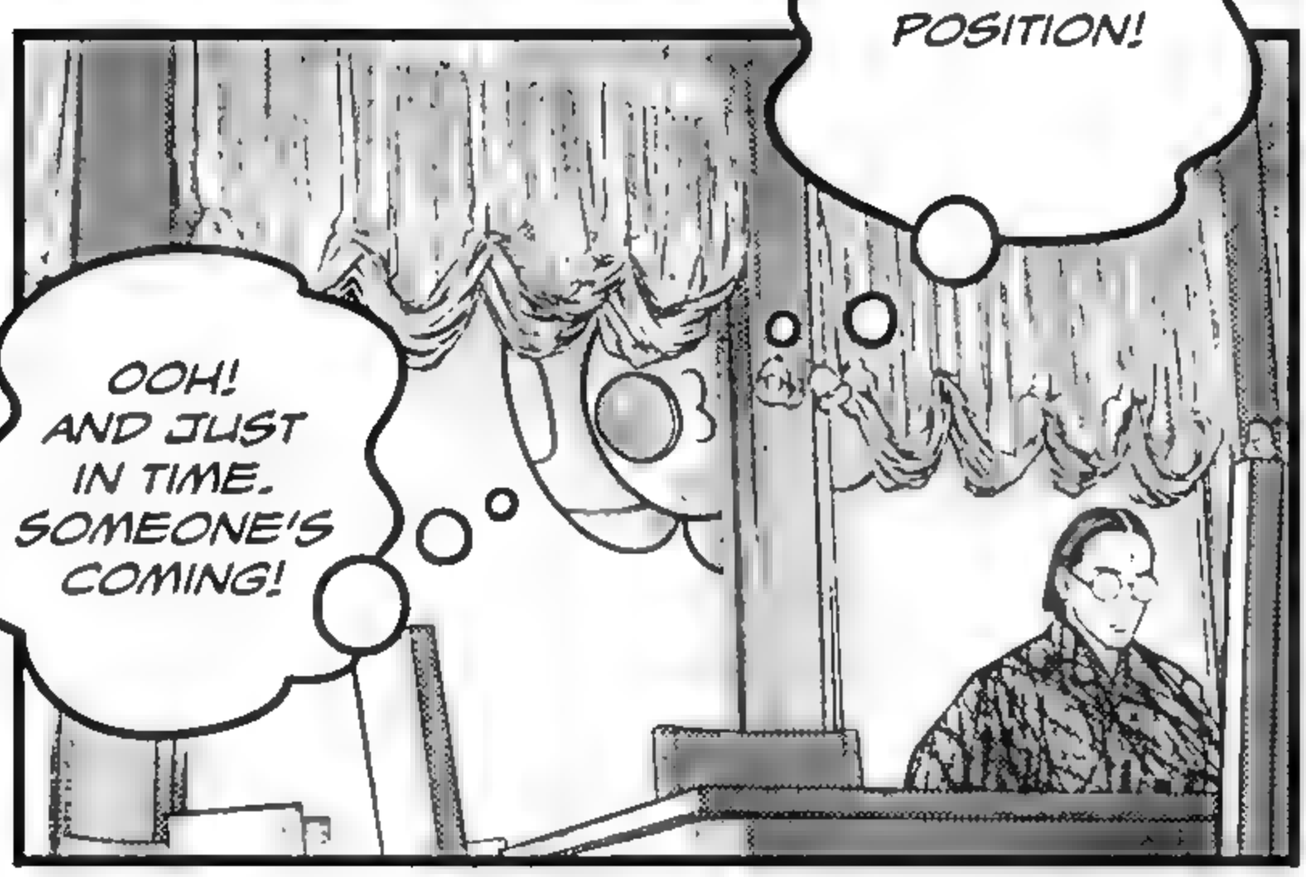
TAKE 5

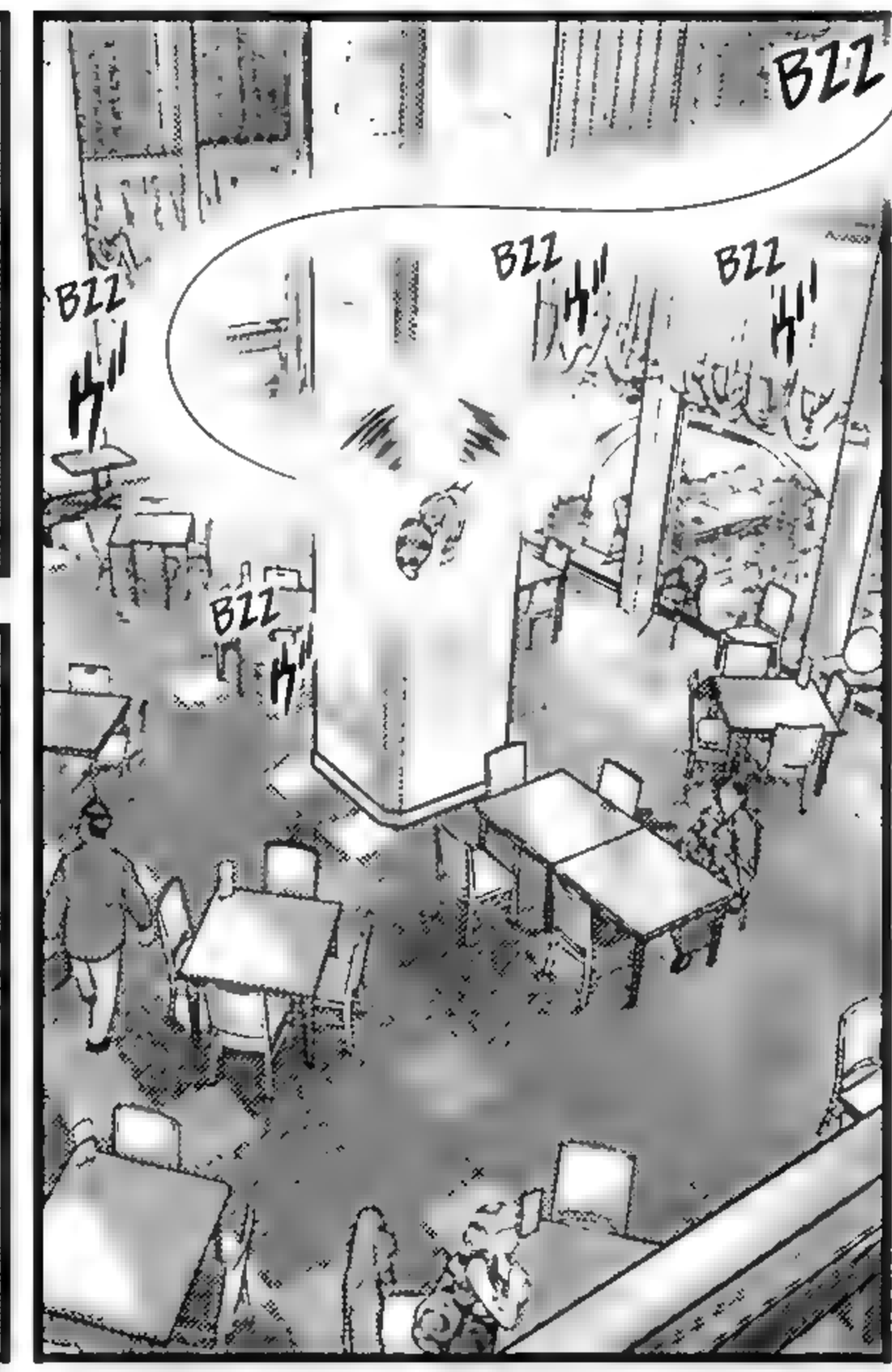

BZZ
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ

TELL ME IT'S NOT...
AM I...?
IS THIS ...?




THP...
LO
DON'T MIND ME!


BINGO! SPYBUG IN POSITION!
OOH! AND JUST IN TIME. SOMEONE'S COMING!


BZZ
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ
BZZ

I APPRECIATE YOUR AGREEING TO MEET IN PERSON.

FORGIVE ME THE UNUSUAL REQUEST, MR. OTOMO.

THAT'S TOMARU OTOMO OF OSAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES !!

WHAA-AAAAT ?!

SKRKRR...

AND NOW THEY'RE MEETING IN SECRET TO TALK?

VRMM...

ISN'T HE THE GUY WHO DISPATCHED THE SPECIAL FORCES SQUAD...

HOW MYSTERI-OUS!

...TO ELIMINATE ATERUI AND KILL WAKAI?!

CUT THE CRAP. WHERE IS IT?

YOU DON'T SEEM PLEASED TO SEE ME ALIVE.
HMHM...
THWMP

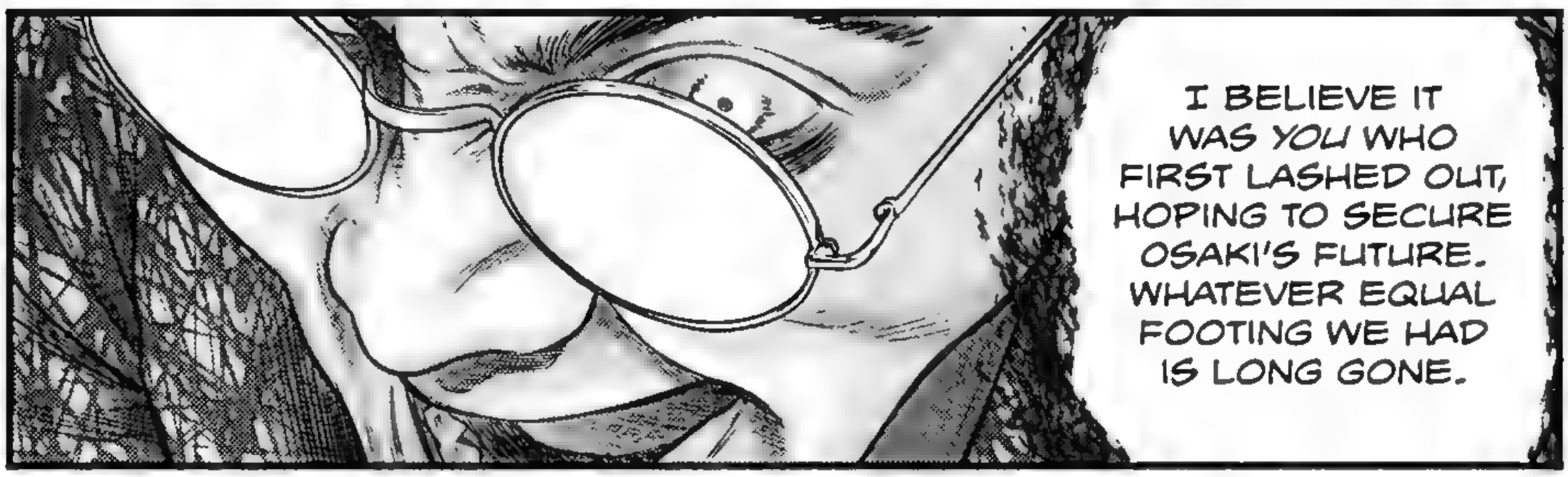
GRIT...
ARE YOU BACKIN' OUT OF OUR DEAL?

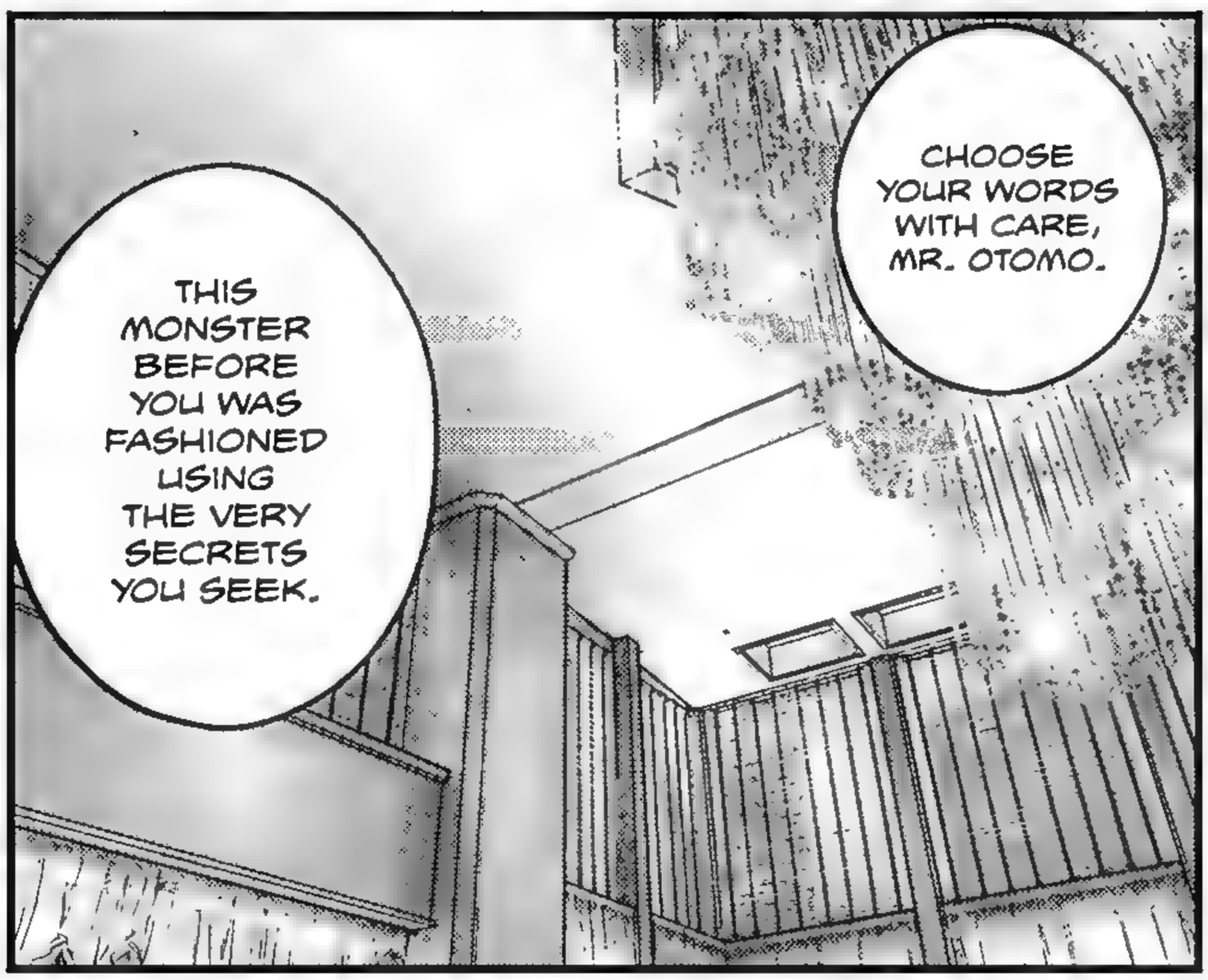
...WOULD NOT LIE IN UNTIMELY GRAVES, THEIR LIVES CUT SHORT BY NEEDLESS SLAUGHTER.
ALAS...
IF YOU'D THOUGHT TO USE YOUR WORDS FROM THE OUTSET, SO MANY OF MY FLOCK...

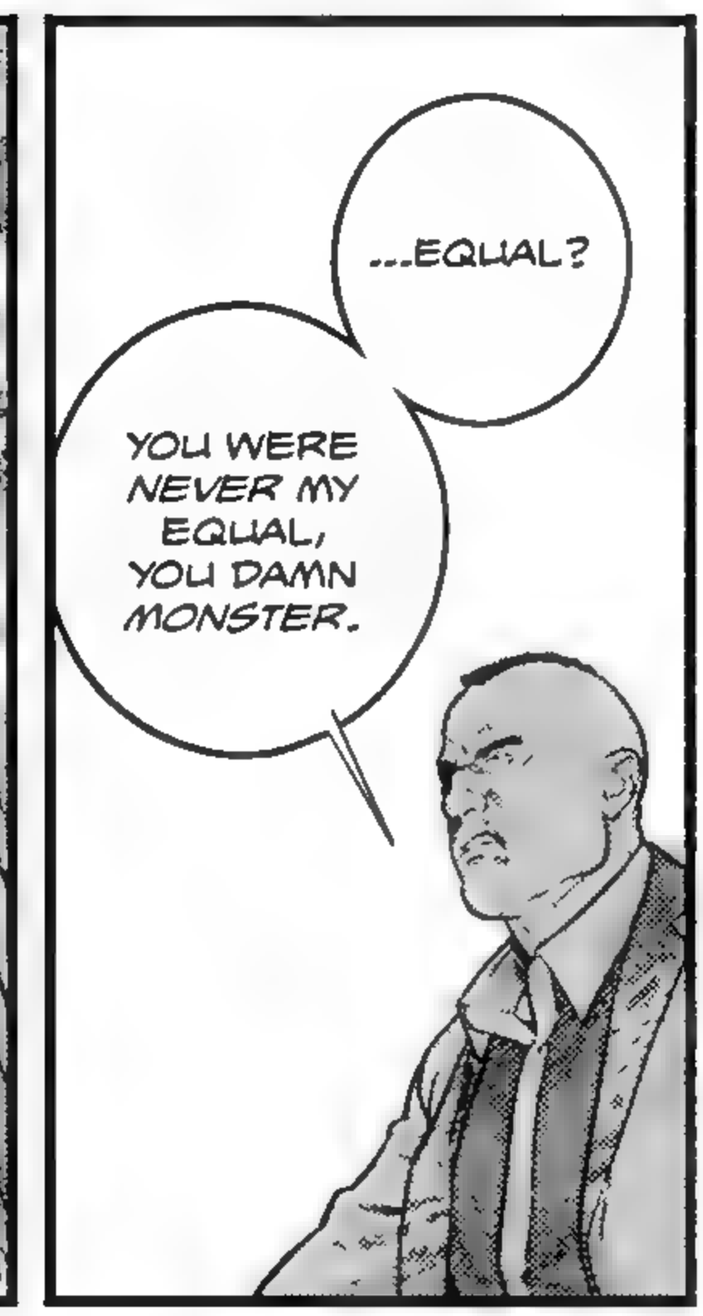
I'M AFRAID YOU'LL NOT FIND IT IN MY POSSESSION.
JUST ANSWER ME.
WHERE ARE YOU HIDING IT?

SURELY OSAKI IS NOT ONE TO THROW STONES.
...

AHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA!
?!


I BELIEVE IT WAS YOU WHO FIRST LASHED OUT, HOPING TO SECURE OSAKI'S FUTURE. WHATEVER EQUAL FOOTING WE HAD IS LONG GONE.


CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WITH CARE, MR. OTOMO.
THIS MONSTER BEFORE YOU WAS FASHIONED USING THE VERY SECRETS YOU SEEK.

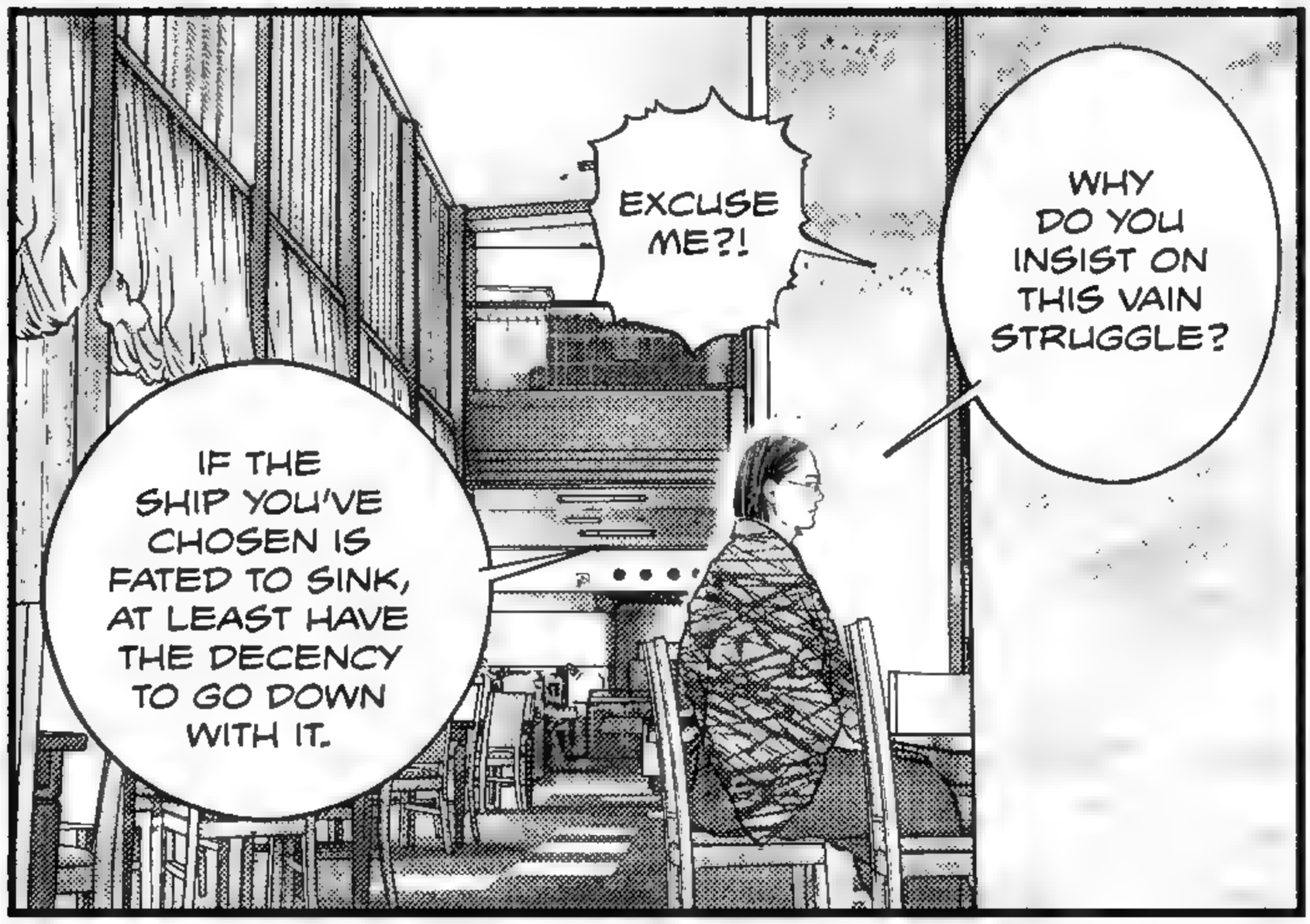

...EQUAL?
YOU WERE NEVER MY EQUAL, YOU DAMN MONSTER.

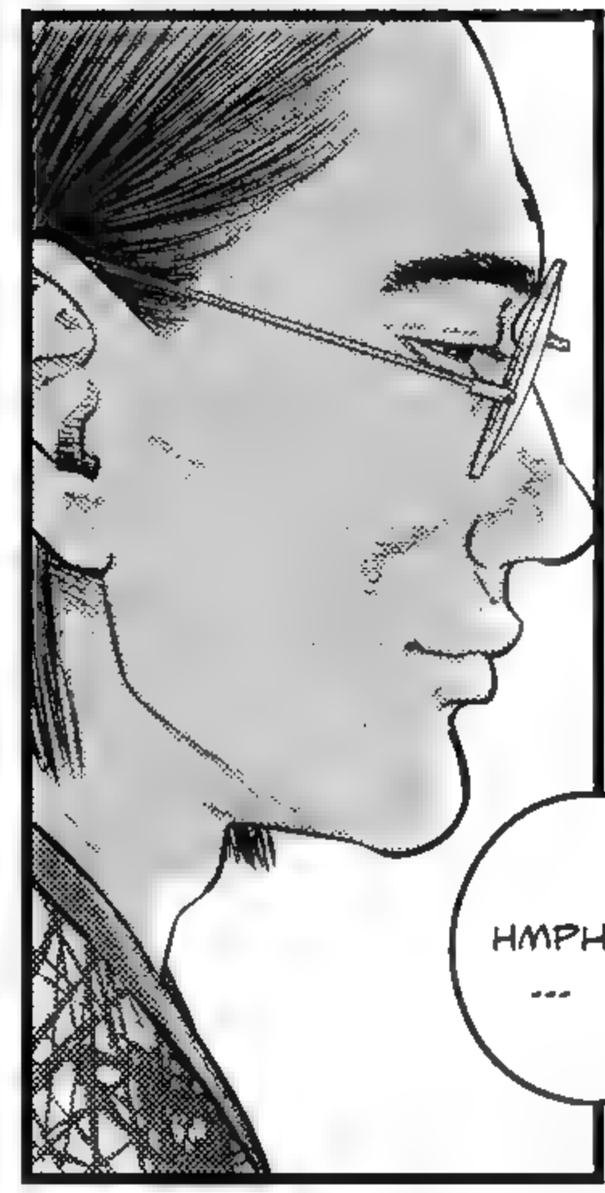
...AND EMERGE AS THE LEADER IN A *NEW* ERA OF *BIONIC* PROSTHETICS...
...AND EVENTUALLY, THE MANUFACTURE OF LIFE ITSELF!
...PALTRY *MECHANICAL* DESIGNS...
WITH YOMOTSU'S KNOWLEDGE, YOUR PRECIOUS COMPANY COULD FINALLY MOVE BEYOND...
オオサキ重工
OSAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES

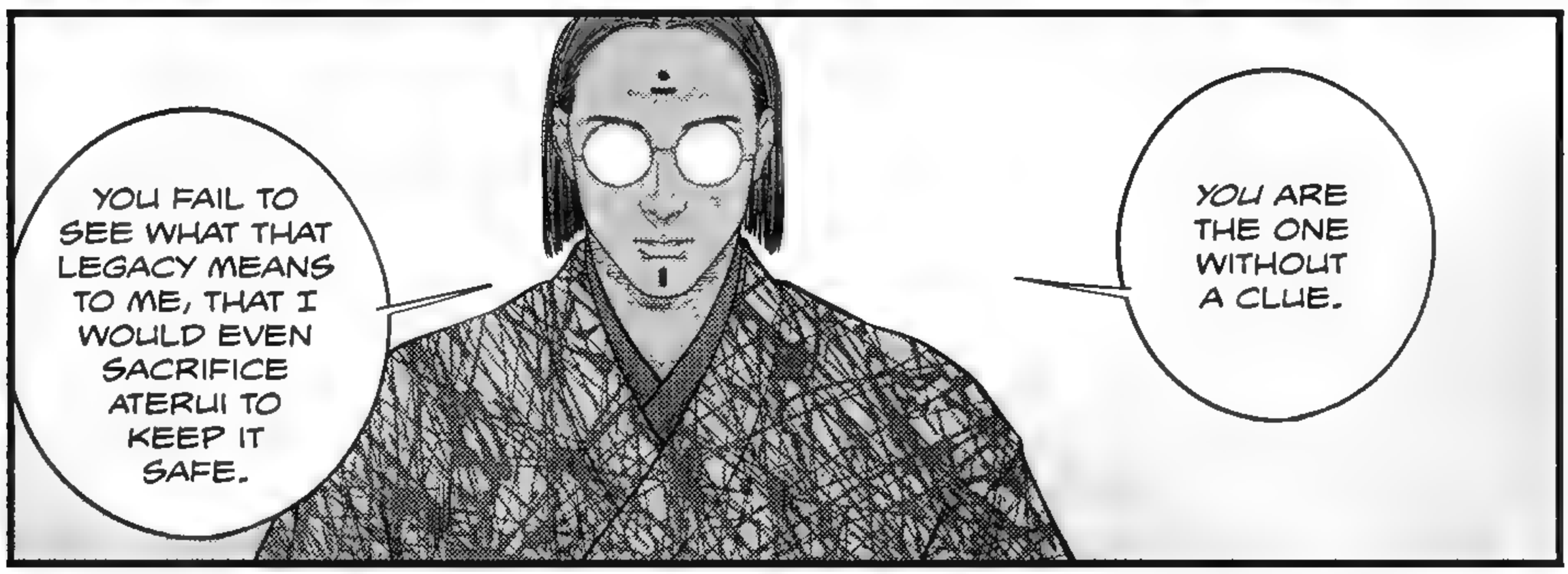
YOU DON'T HAVE THE FIRST DAMN CLUE...
SPARE ME THE LECTURE. I DON'T NEED YOUR PITY.

...THANKS TO THAT BASTARD KAZUYUKI HASHIKAMI.

AND RIGHT NOW, IT'S ALL ON THE VERGE OF *SINKING*...
...HOW MUCH *SWEAT* AND *BLOOD* I'VE SHED TO MAKE OSAKI WHAT IT IS TODAY.


EXCUSE ME?!
WHY DO YOU INSIST ON THIS VAIN STRUGGLE?
IF THE SHIP YOU'VE CHOSEN IS FATED TO SINK, AT LEAST HAVE THE DECENCY TO GO DOWN WITH IT.

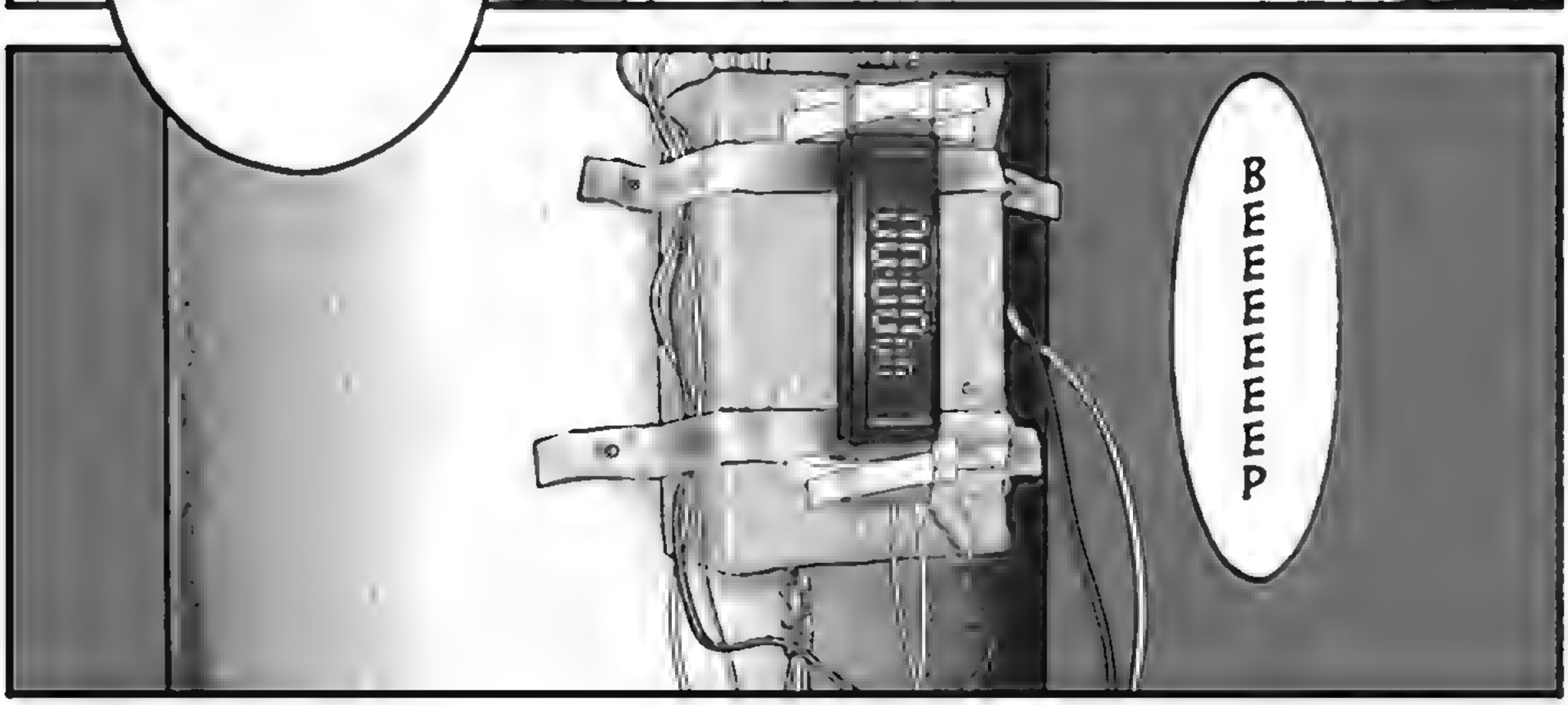

HMPH ...

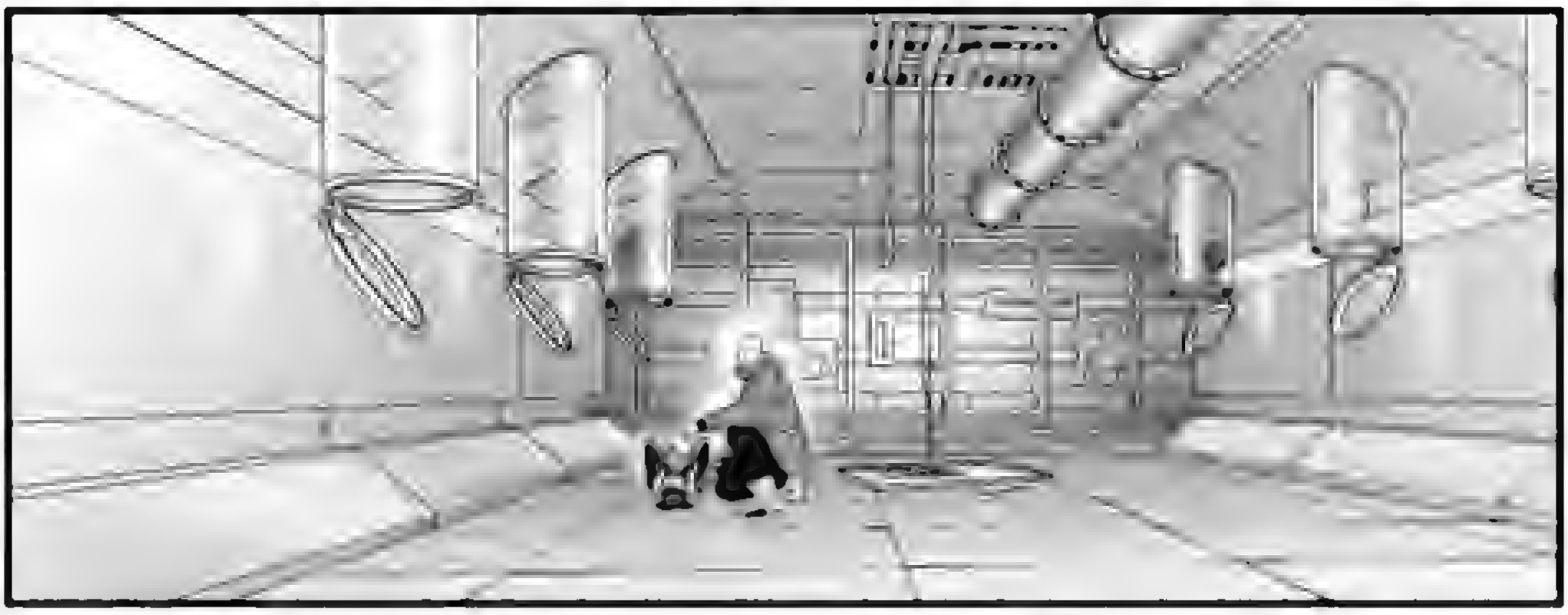

YOU FAIL TO SEE WHAT THAT LEGACY MEANS TO ME, THAT I WOULD EVEN SACRIFICE ATERUI TO KEEP IT SAFE.
YOU ARE THE ONE WITHOUT A CLUE.

...THE AGONY IT IS TO WIELD A BLADE AND THRUST DEEP...
...INTO THE LAST TRACE OF A HOME SHARED WITH MOTHER AND COMPANION.
YOUR FEEBLE MIND COULD NEVER HOPE TO FATHOM...

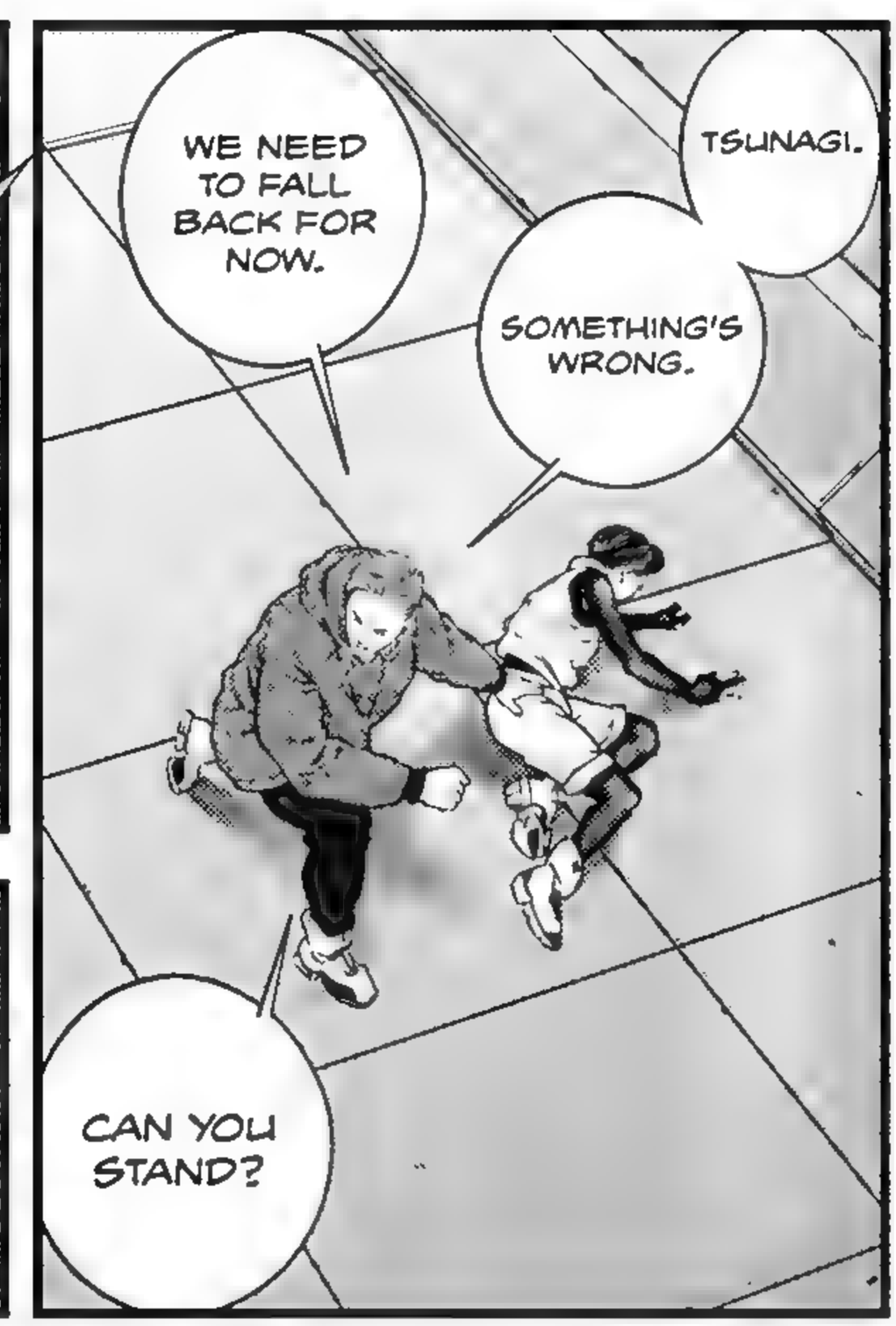
WHAT THE HELL DID YOU DO TO YOMOTSU?!
SHIT. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
CLATTER

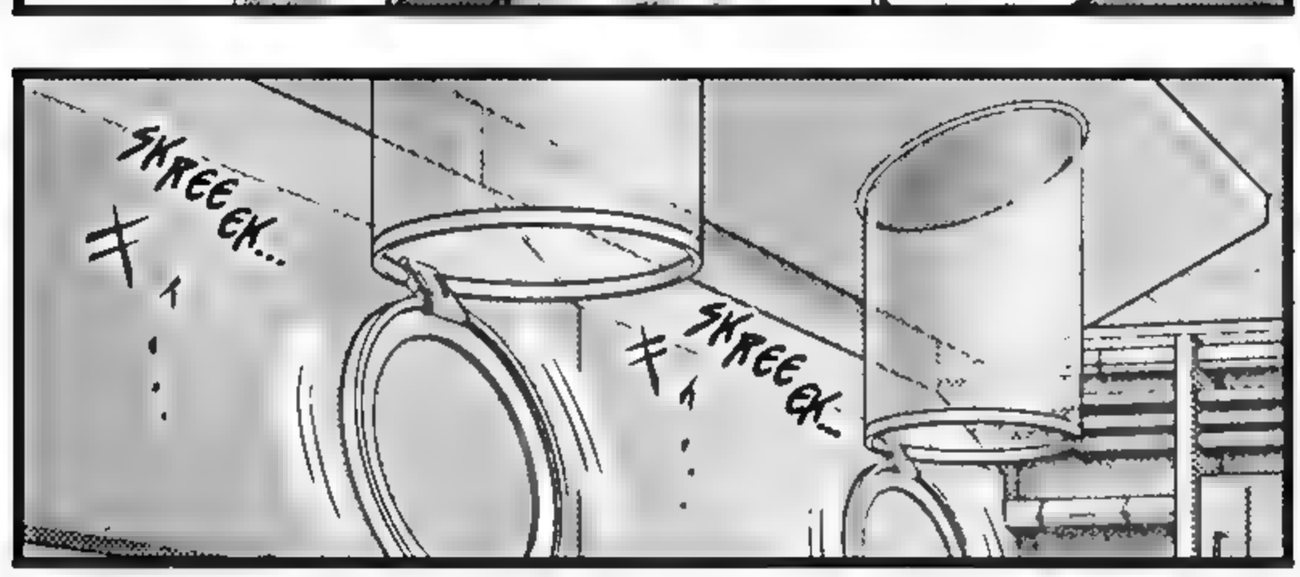
BIP
BIP
BIP
BIP
I MERELY DELIVERED A PEACE LONG DESERVED.


BEEEEEEEP

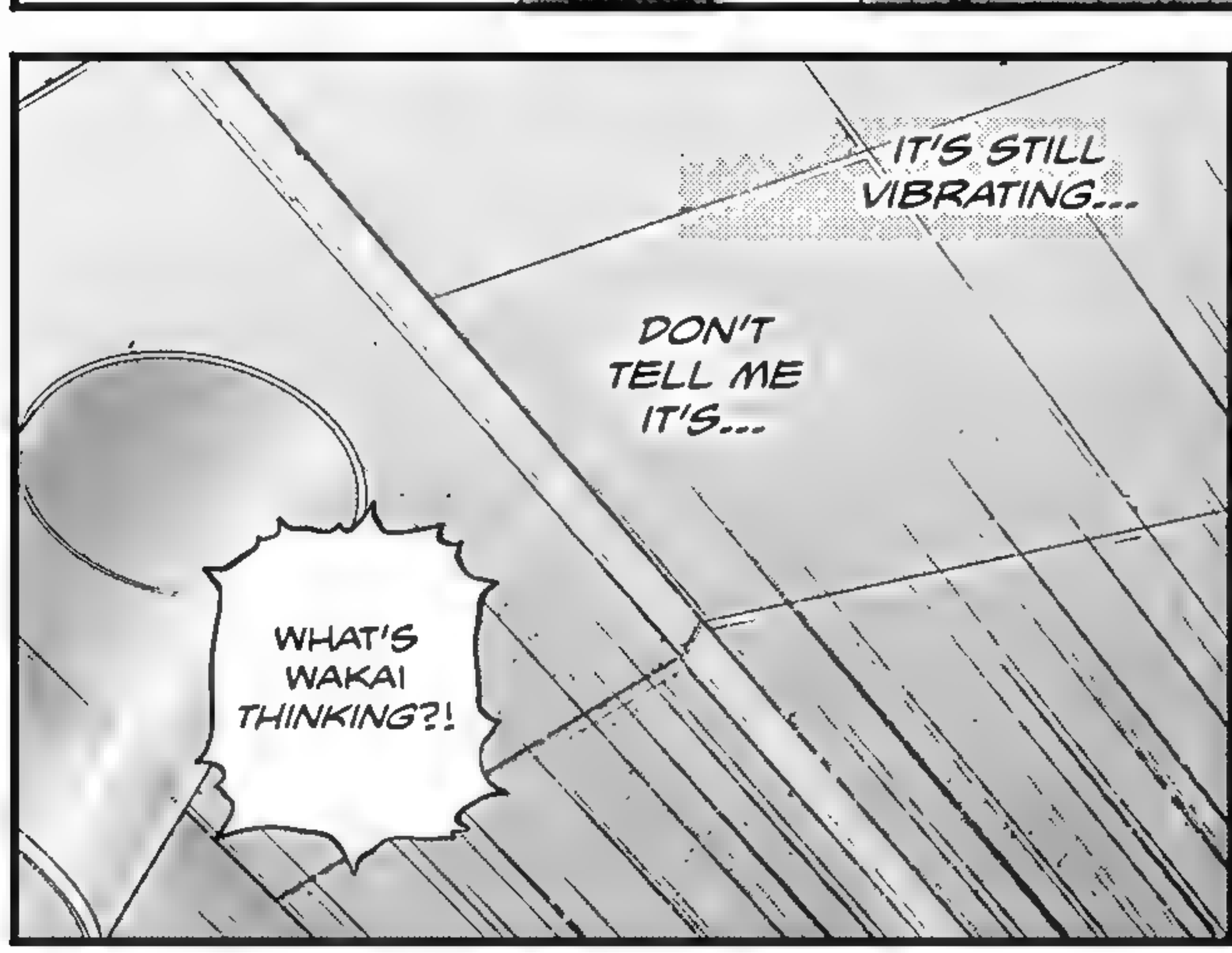


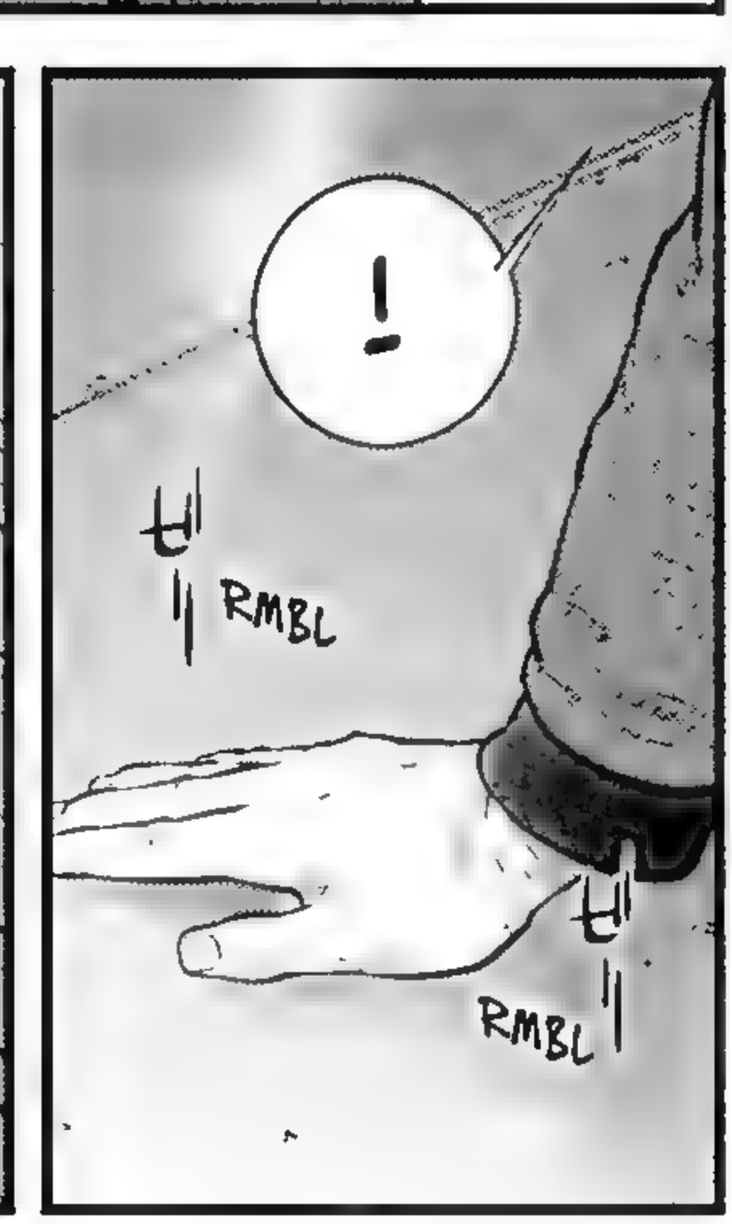
?!
BRRRRRM


WE NEED TO FALL BACK FOR NOW.
TSUNAGI.
SOMETHING'S WRONG.
CAN YOU STAND?


SKREEEK...
SKREEEK...

NOT AN EARTHQUAKE. SOME KIND OF EXPLOSION...?
...WHAT WAS THAT?


IT'S STILL VIBRATING...
DON'T TELL ME IT'S...
WHAT'S WAKAI THINKING?!


!
RMBL
RMBL

CLICK
KRKRSH

DOES HE WANT TO SEE THE WHOLE PLACE SINK?!
THIS FACILITY'S BUILT INTO THE BASE OF THE DAM.

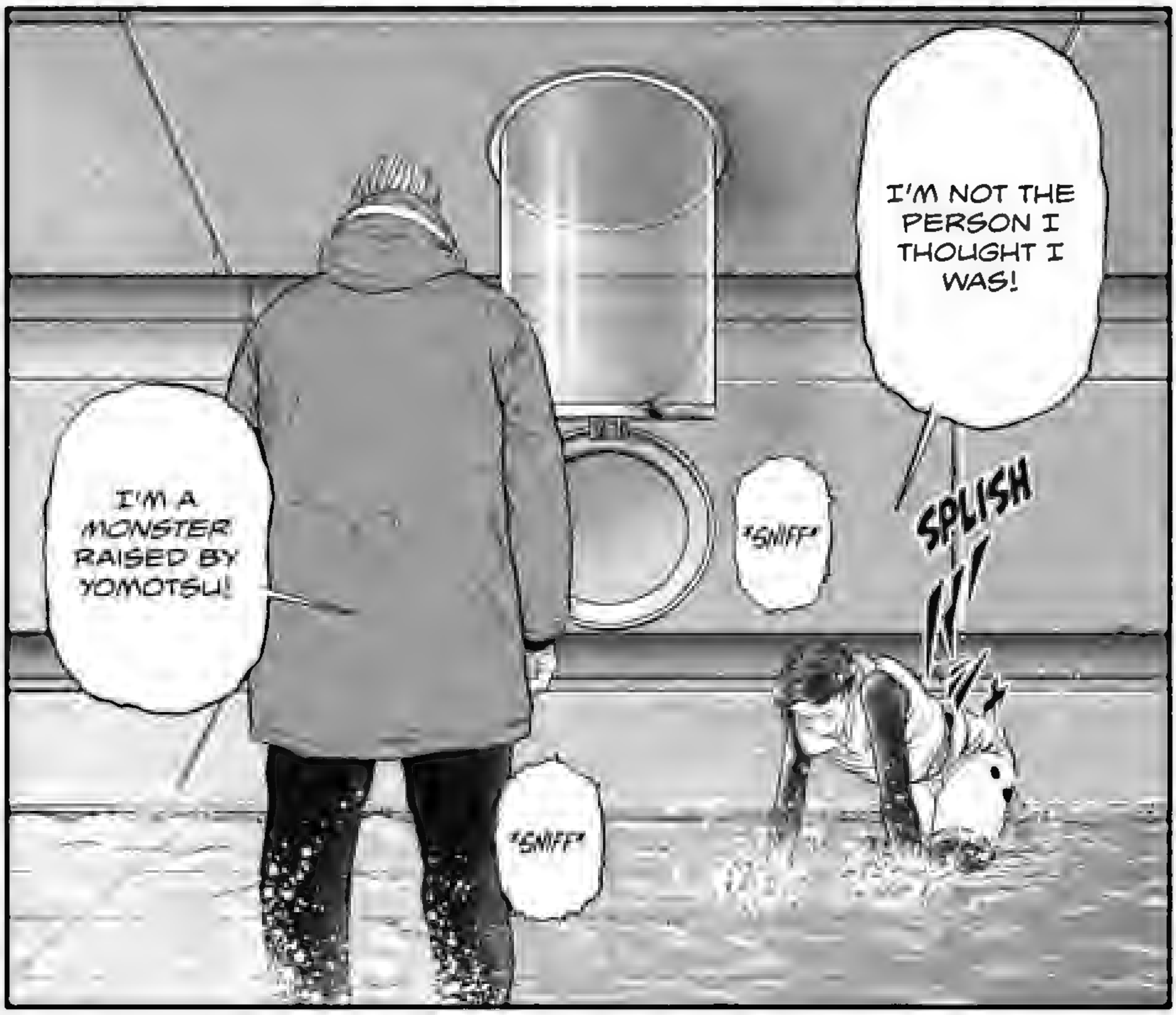
IT'S WAKAI!
TSUNAGI, YOU NEED TO GET UP!
HE'S TRYING TO FLOOD THE PLACE!
FRSH

WAKAI ...?

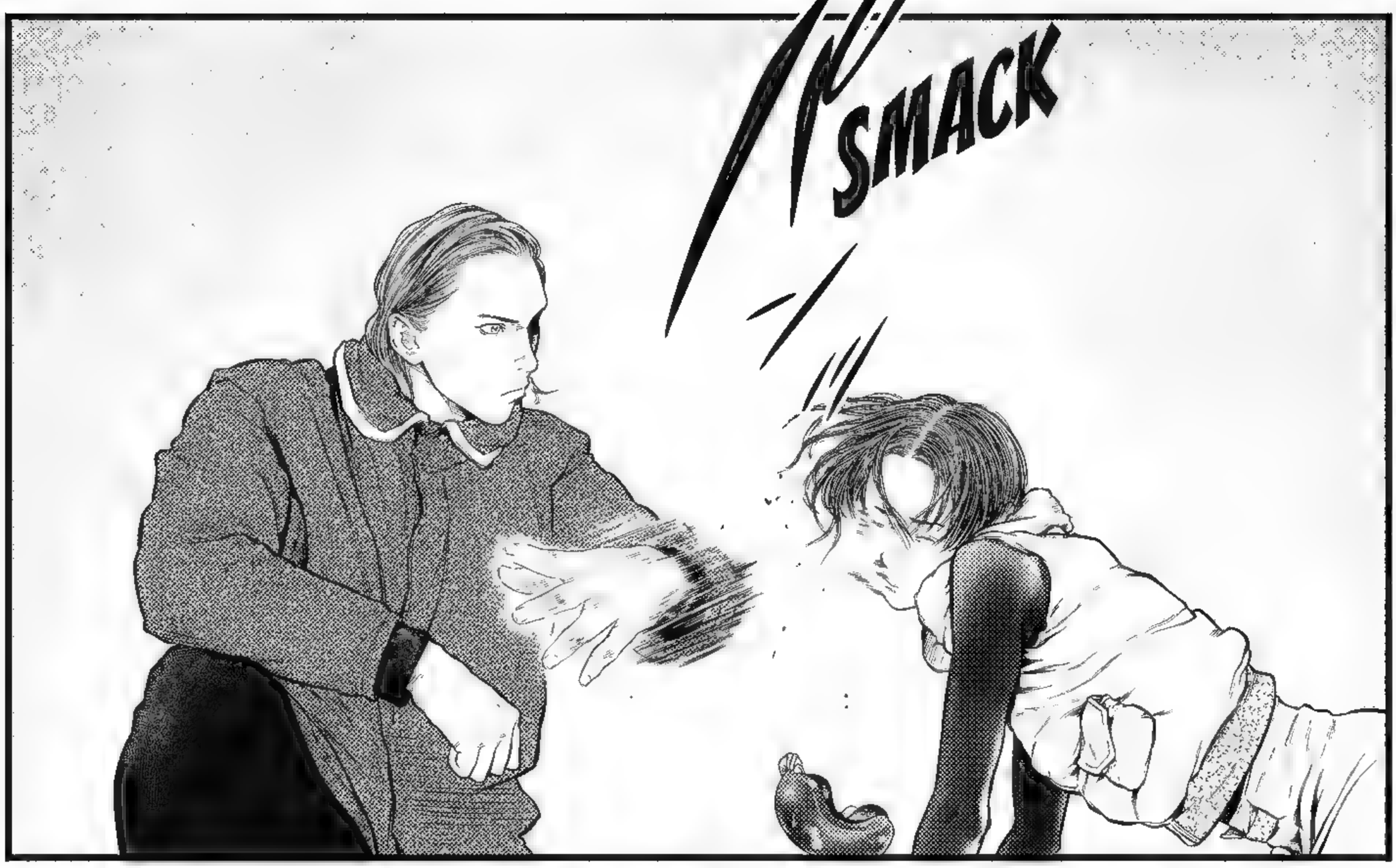
HE'S DOING THIS? BUT HE LOOKS AFTER ME. HE'S MY BROTHER.
?!

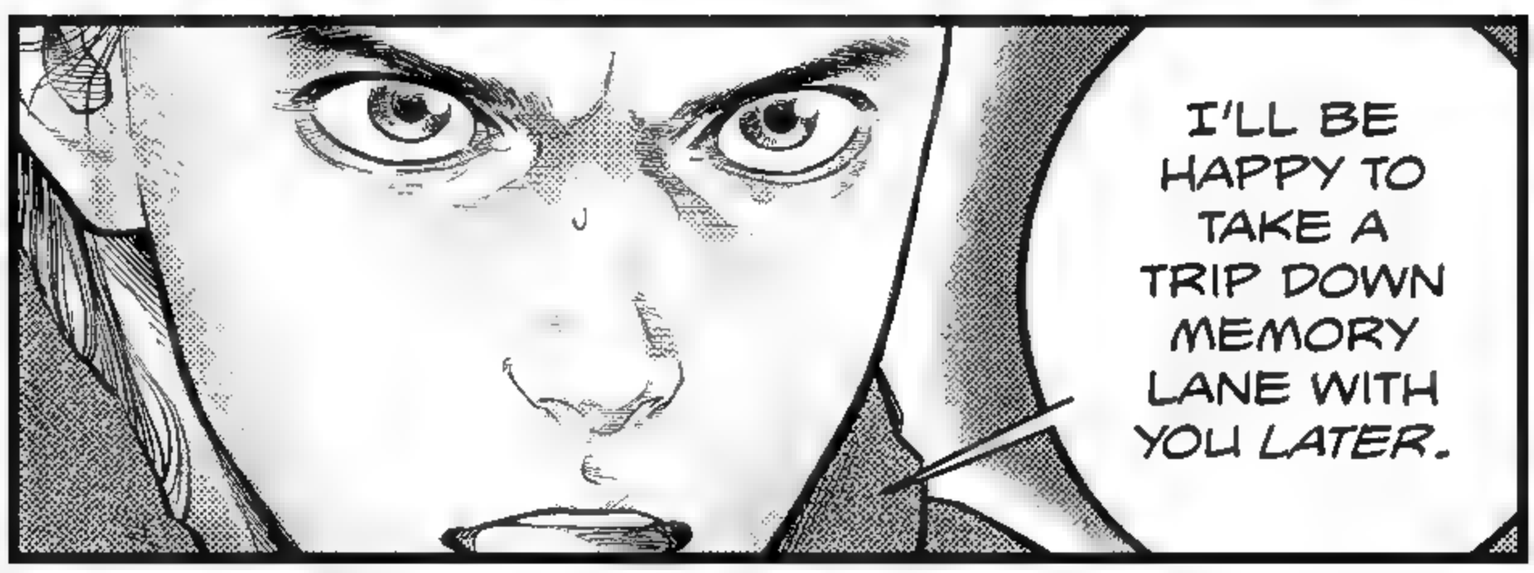
RMMBL
DAMN!
14
TRIGGER

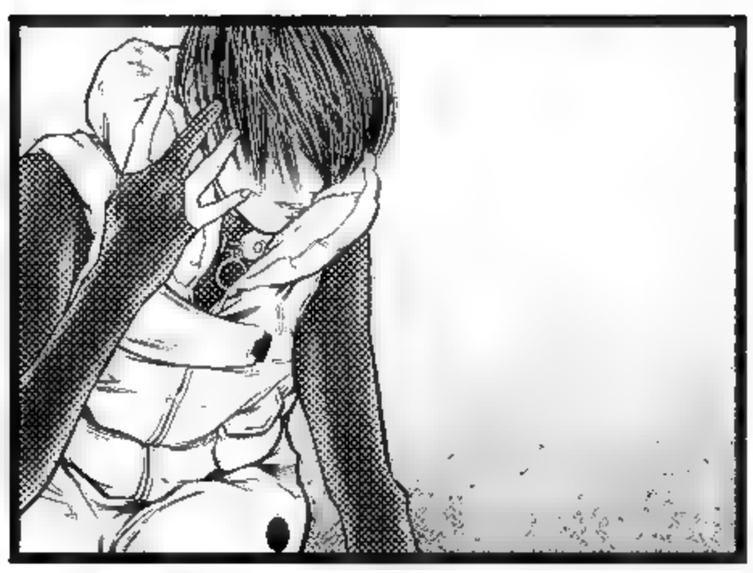
I'M NOT...
UWAA!
TOGUSA... I...


I'M NOT THE PERSON I THOUGHT I WAS!
I'M A MONSTER RAISED BY YOMOTSU!
"SNIFF"
SPLISH
"SNIFF"

I BET I WAS GROWN RIGHT HERE, INSIDE ONE OF THESE TANKS.
"SNIFF"


SMACK


I'LL BE HAPPY TO TAKE A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH YOU *LATER*.



DO YOU *HEAR* ME, TSUNAGI?
WHAP

FRSHHH
THIS WHOLE PLACE IS GOING TO BE UNDERWATER SOON.
WE NEED TO ACT *NOW*.
RIGHT NOW, WE'RE AT THE BOTTOM OF A DAM THAT'S ON THE VERGE OF COLLAPSE.

YOU AND I...
...ARE JUST FLESH AND BLOOD.

SO I WANT YOU TO THINK VERY CAREFULLY.

WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR US TO DO RIGHT NOW?

WE DON'T HAVE PROSTHETIC BODIES.

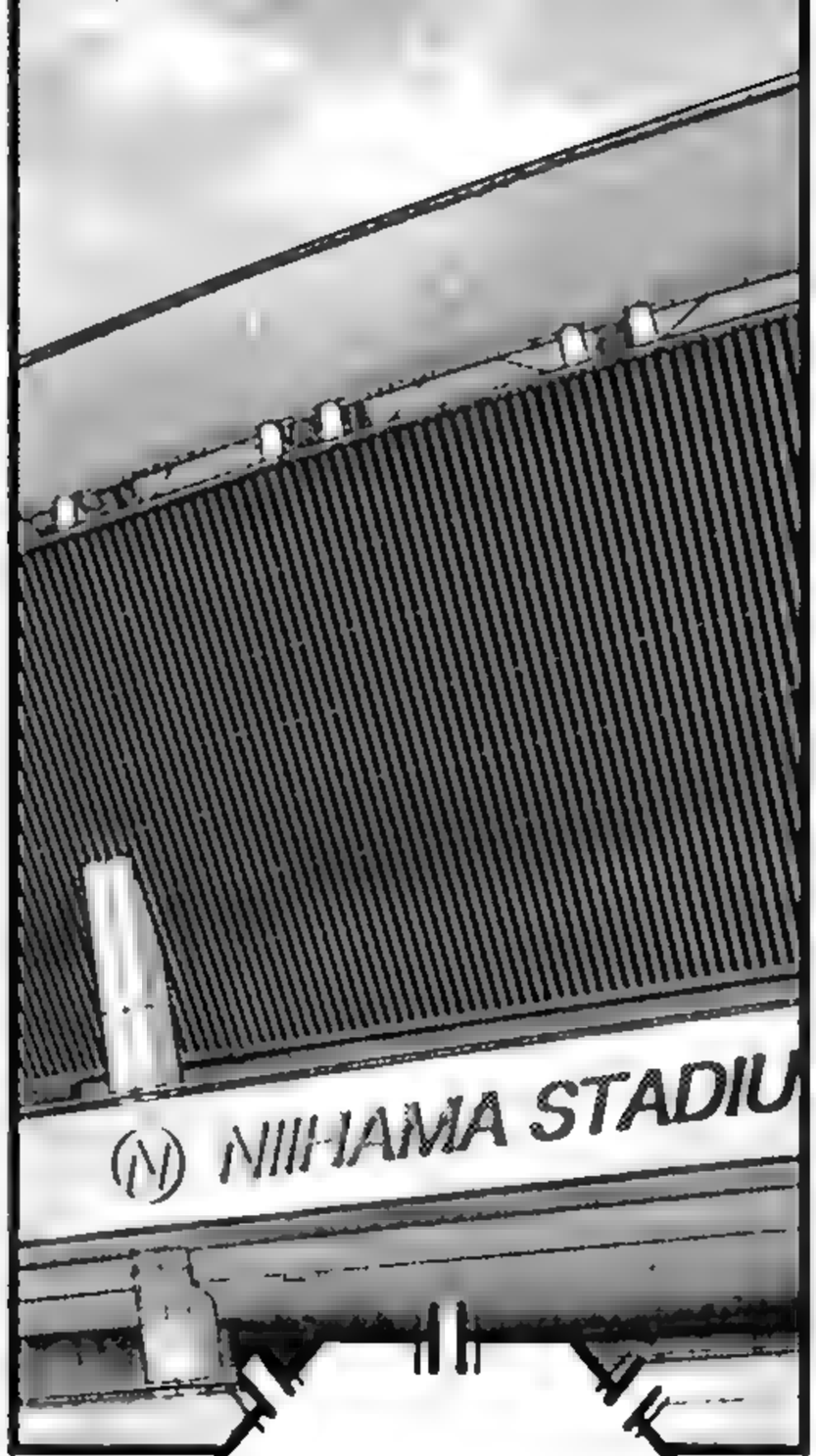
WE FEEL PAIN WHEN WE GET HIT. WE CRY. WE BLEED.

AND IF WE DROWN, WE DIE.

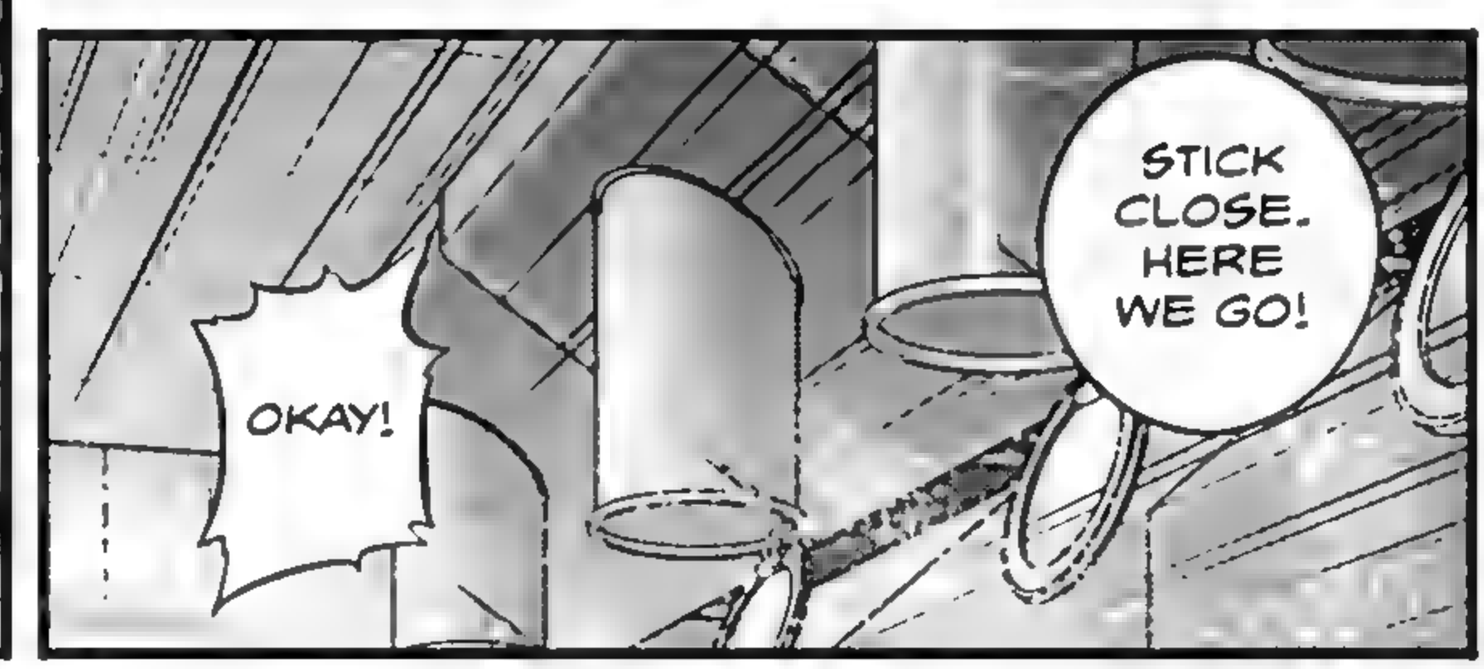
WE NEED AIR TO BREATHE.

WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE.

WE NEED...

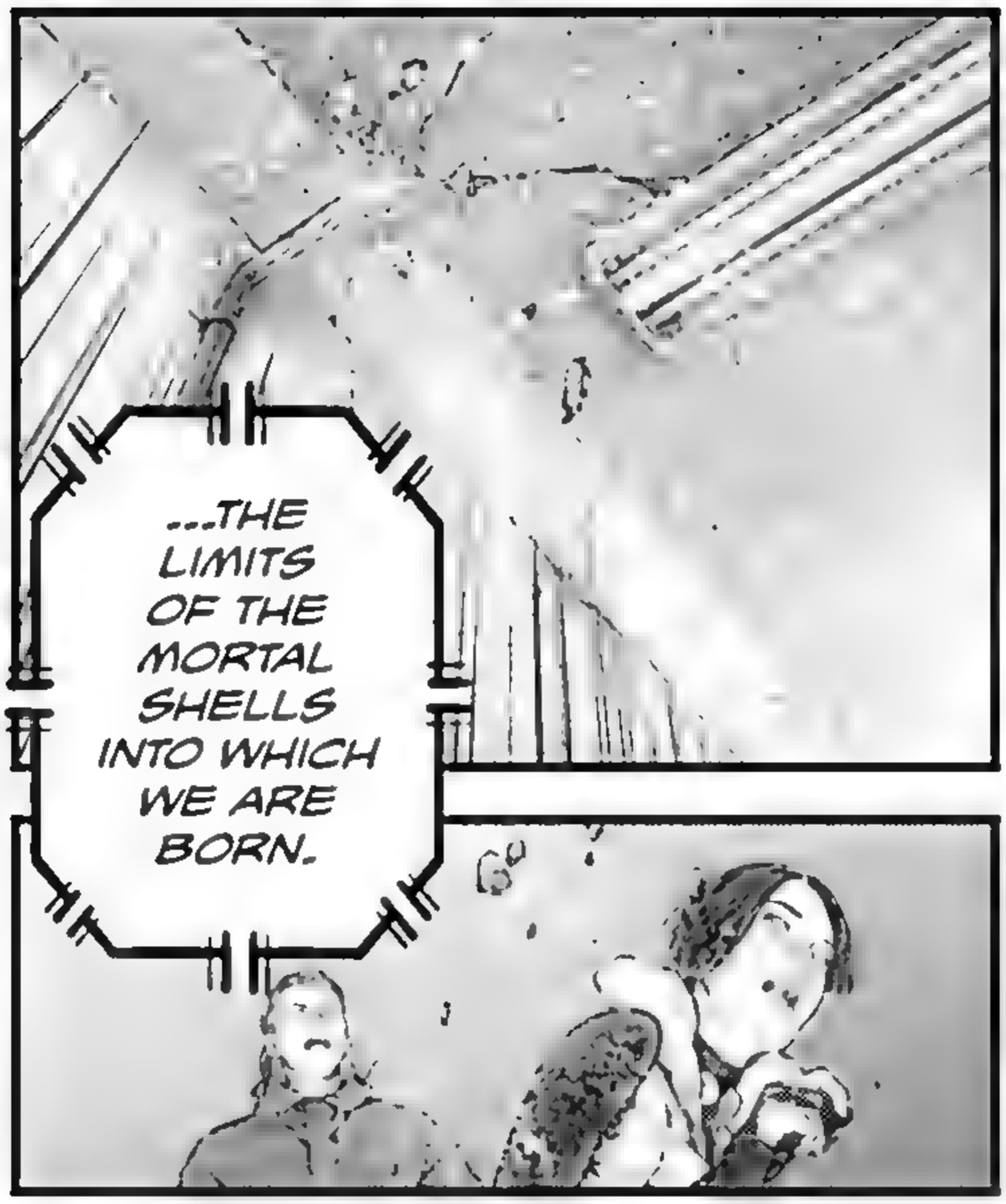

NIIHAMA STADIU

WIPE


OKAY!
STICK CLOSE. HERE WE GO!

I KNOW AS YOU DO...

...HOW FRAIL AND FEEBLE WE ARE IN BODIES OF FLESH AND BLOOD.


...THE LIMITS OF THE MORTAL SHELLS INTO WHICH WE ARE BORN.

I KNOW AS YOU DO...

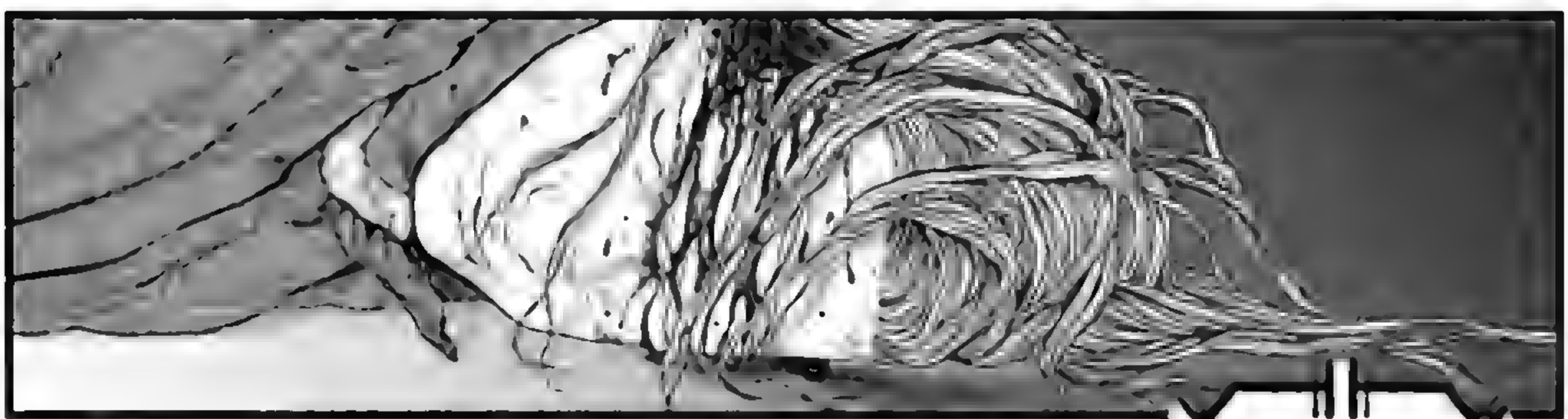
STRUGGLE AS WE MAY AGAINST THOSE SHACK-LES...
...NEVER WILL WE CAST THEM OFF AS WE ARE NOW.

INDEED, THE DAY WILL COME FOR EACH OF US...

POWERLESS
POWERLESS

...WHEN WE ARE FORCED TO CONFRONT HOW POWERLESS WE TRULY ARE.

IT IS WHY HUMANITY HAS LONG TURNED TO THE HEAVENS...



THE FUTURE IS UPON US.
CAN YOU SEE IT?

WE ARE FORCED TO LIVE UNDER CONSTANT THREAT OF DEATH.

WE ARE RAVAGED BY FORCES OF NATURE...

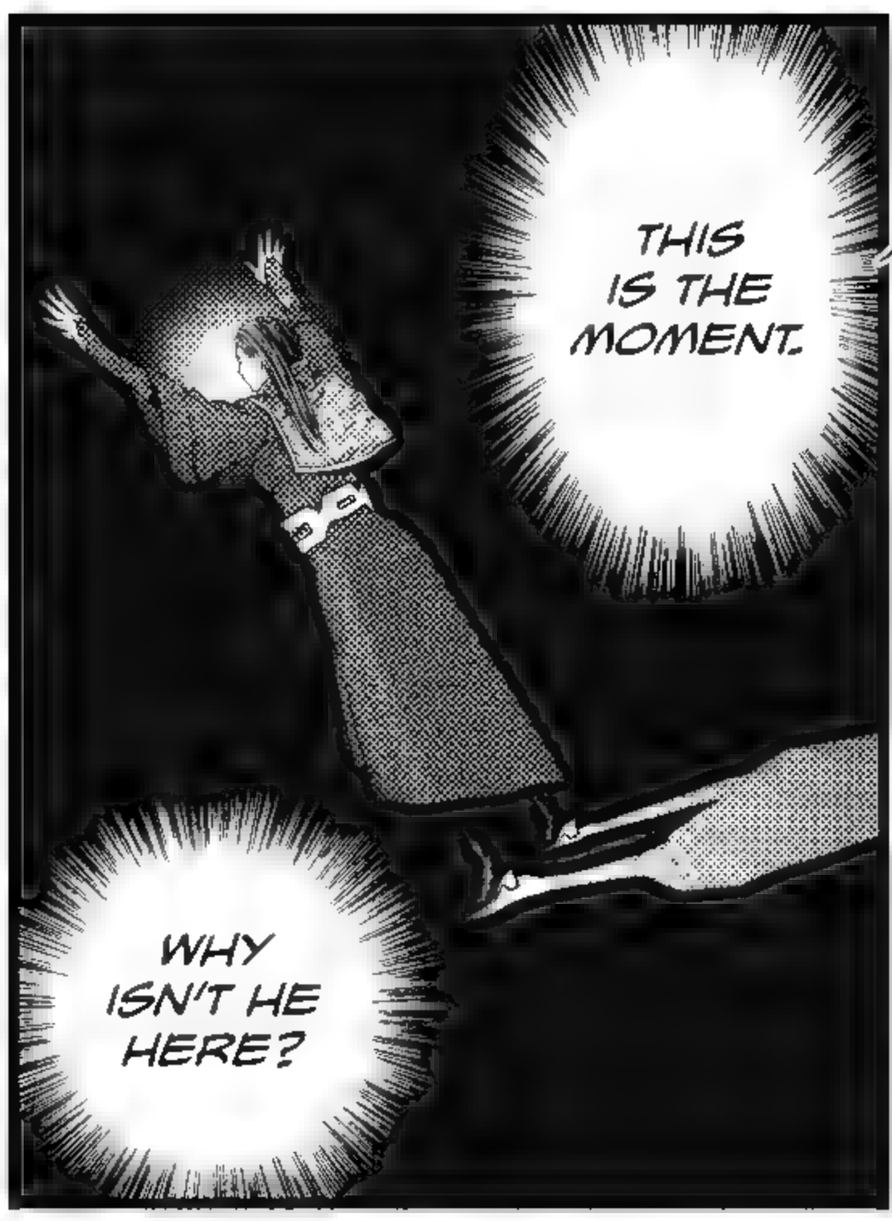
...AND SET UPON BY ALL MANNER OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

THE FUTURE IS UPON US.
CAN YOU SEE IT?

...THAT PROS-THETICIZATION WILL DELIVER UNTO US THE HOPE THAT IS RIGHTFULLY OURS!
NOW!

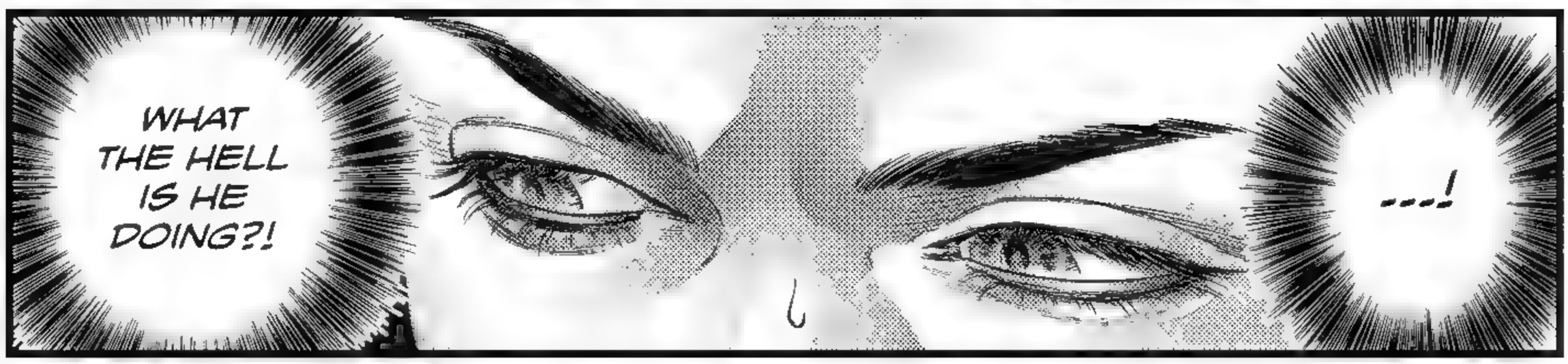
CLENCH
I, SHINRA MIKOMOTO, SWEAR TO YOU TODAY...

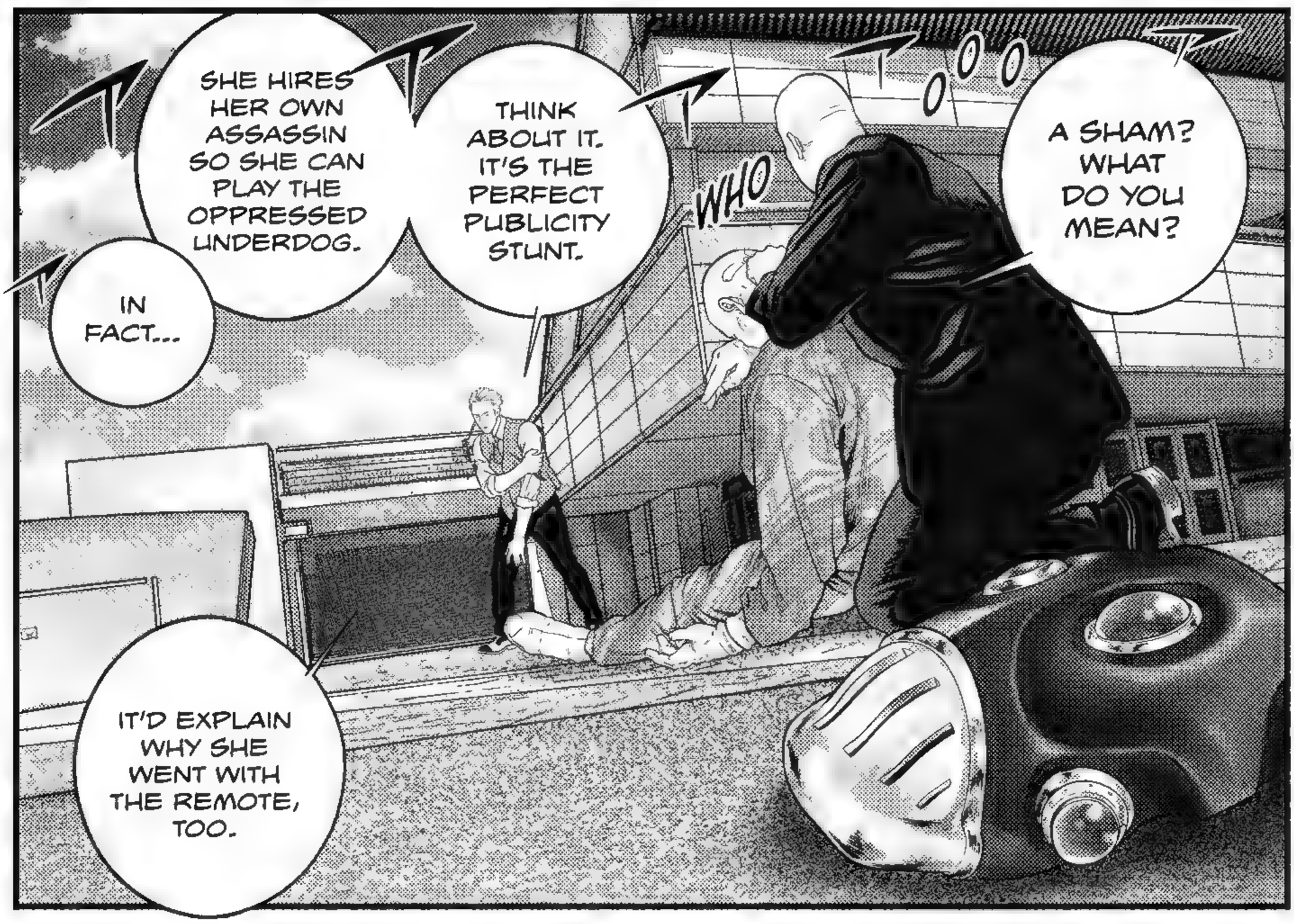
HURRAH!
LET US PROCEED TOGETHER...
...TO THE NEXT STAGE OF HUMANITY!


THIS IS THE MOMENT.
WHY ISN'T HE HERE?

WHO O O O

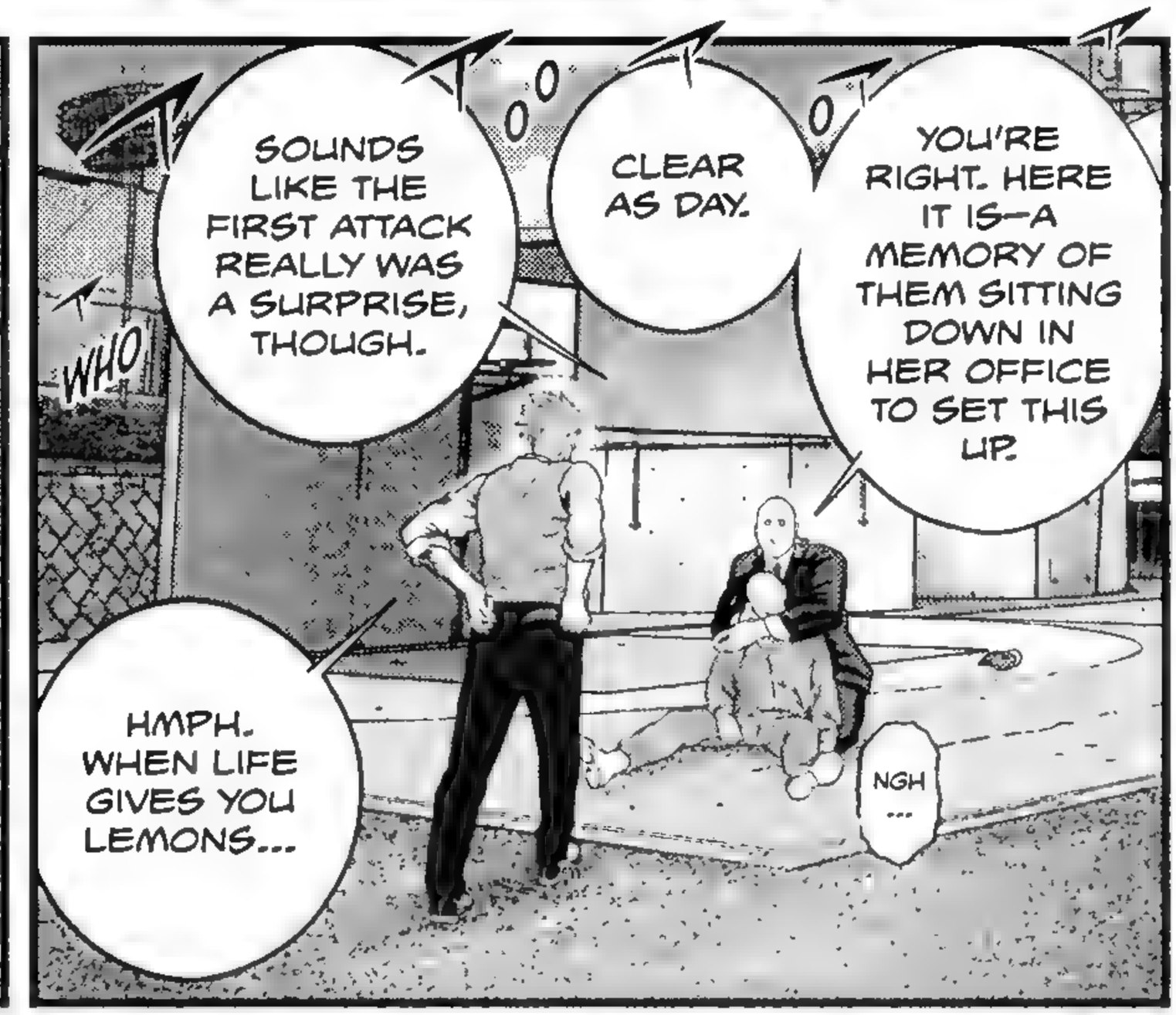
COME. DESCEND UPON ME.


WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING?!
...!

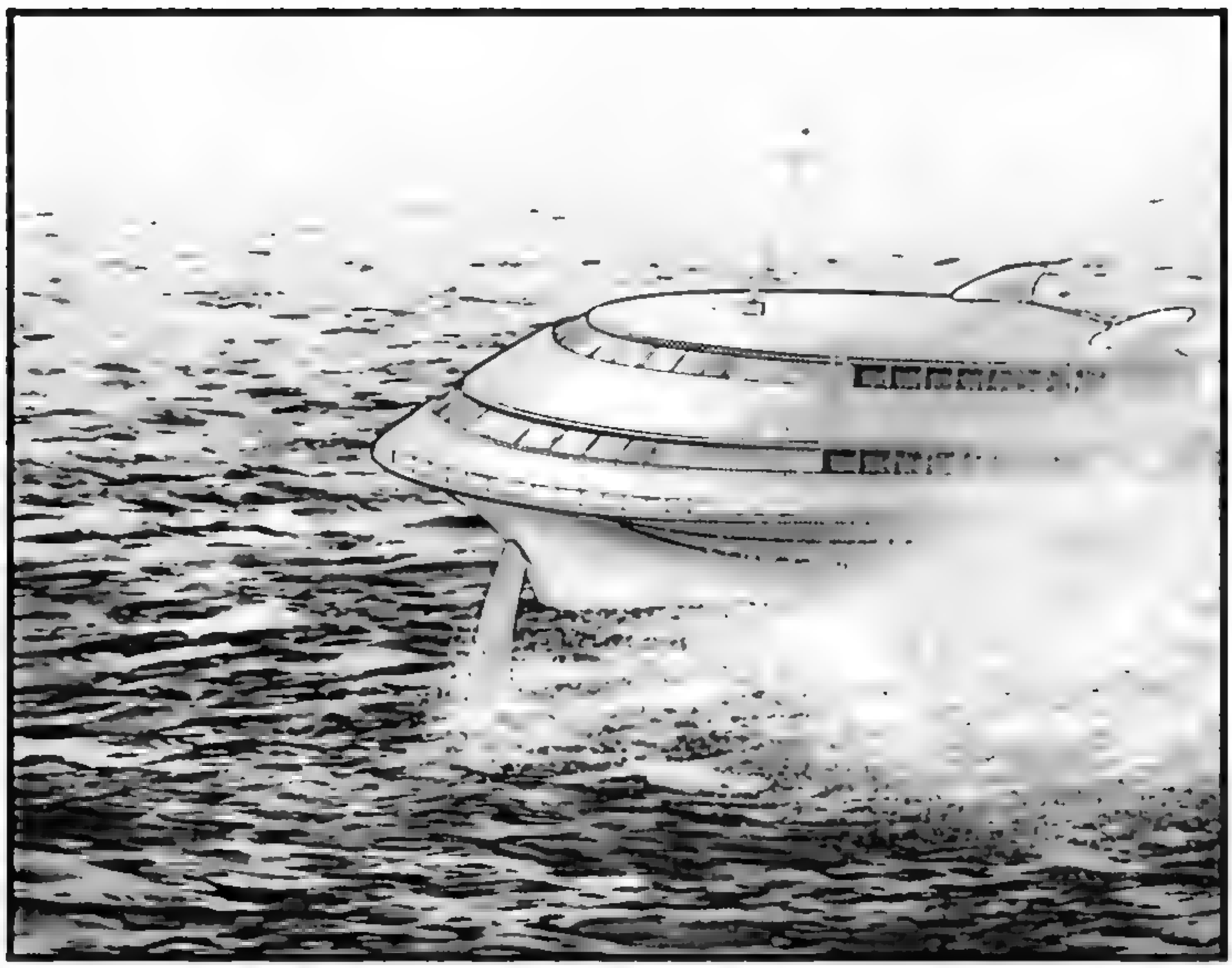

SHE HIRES HER OWN ASSASSIN SO SHE CAN PLAY THE OPPRESSED UNDERDOG.
THINK ABOUT IT. IT'S THE PERFECT PUBLICITY STUNT.
WHO O O O
A SHAM? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IN FACT...
IT'D EXPLAIN WHY SHE WENT WITH THE REMOTE, TOO.

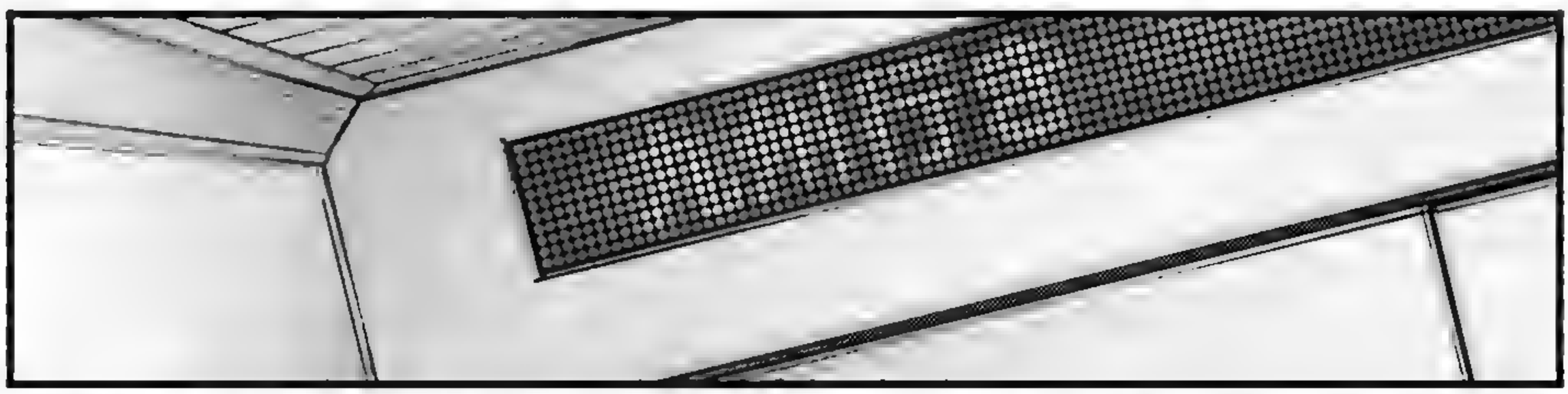
I'D WAGER SHE HASN'T GIVEN UP HER ACTING CAREER JUST YET.

WELL, PAL, I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU...
...BUT SCRIPTED OR NOT, WE CAN'T HAVE ANYONE LAYIN' A FINGER ON THE PRINCESS. NOT ON OUR WATCH.

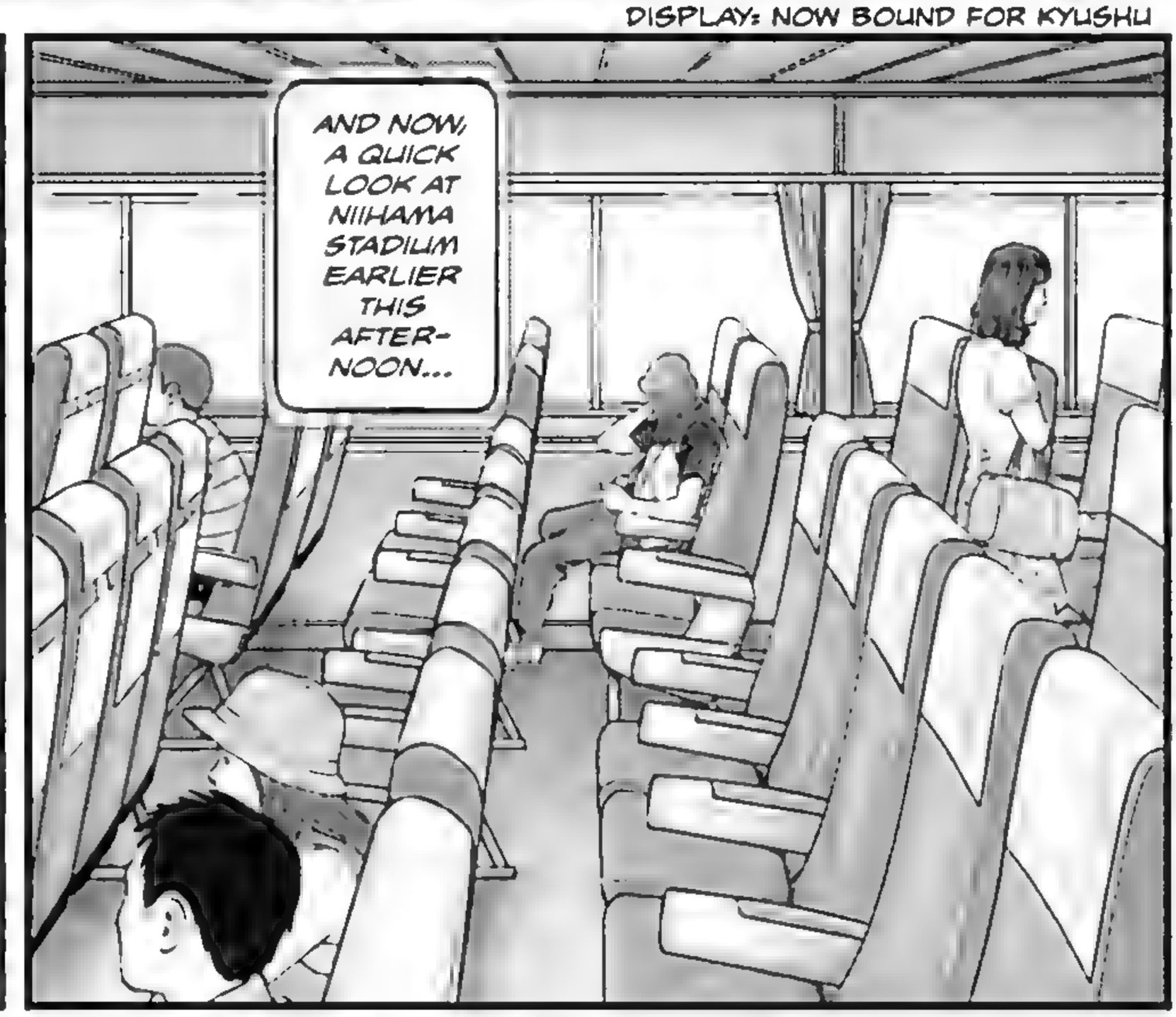

WHO
SOUNDS LIKE THE FIRST ATTACK REALLY WAS A SURPRISE, THOUGH.
CLEAR AS DAY.
YOU'RE RIGHT. HERE IT IS—A MEMORY OF THEM SITTING DOWN IN HER OFFICE TO SET THIS UP.
HMPH. WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS...
NGH ...

WHO
NAH. JUST EARNIN' OUR KEEP.
HOPE WE'RE NOT ABUSING OUR AUTHORITY HERE.
BZZZRT
GRK!



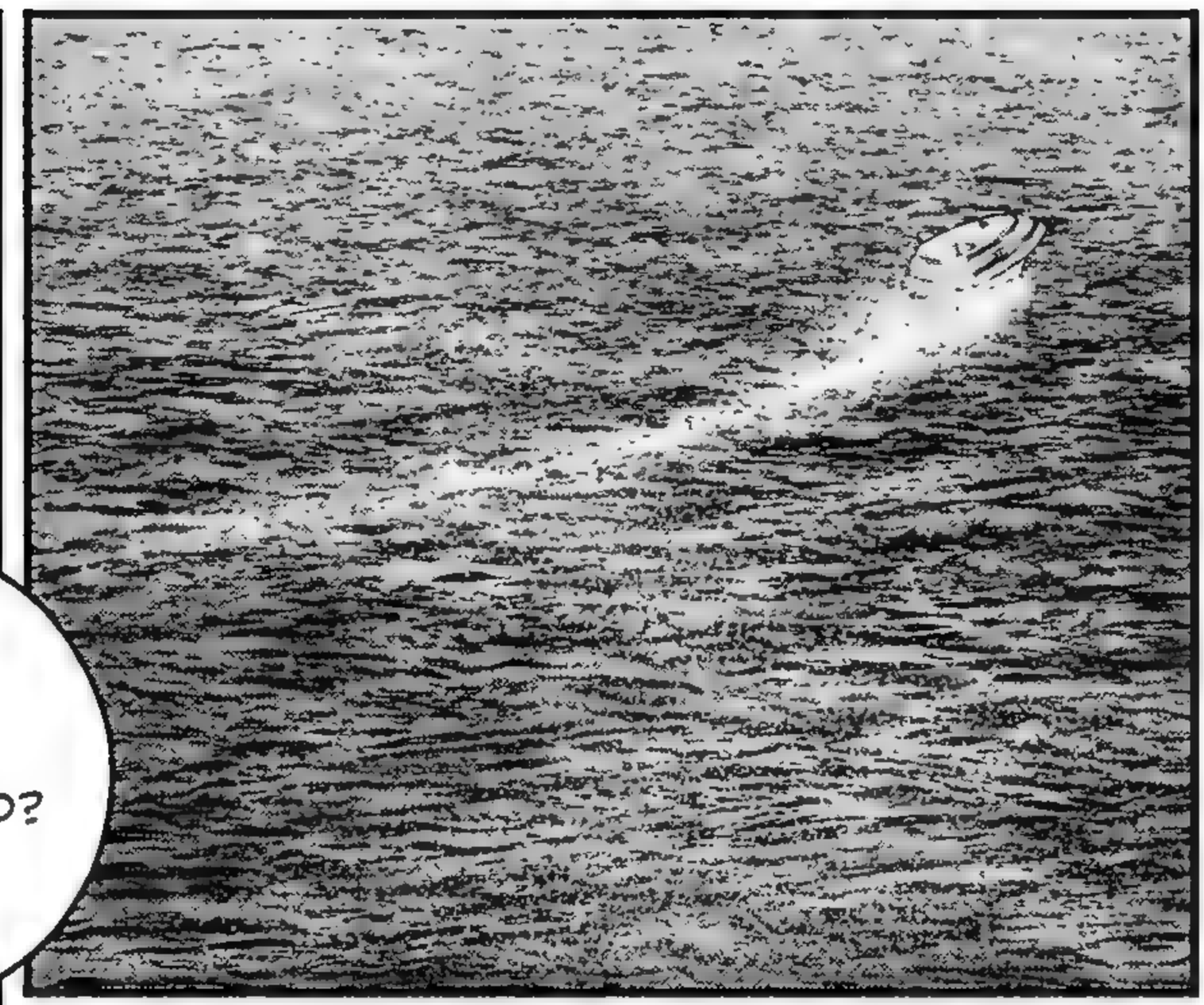


DISPLAY: NOW BOUND FOR KYUSHU



ONLY THREE DAYS REMAIN UNTIL THE ELEC-TION...

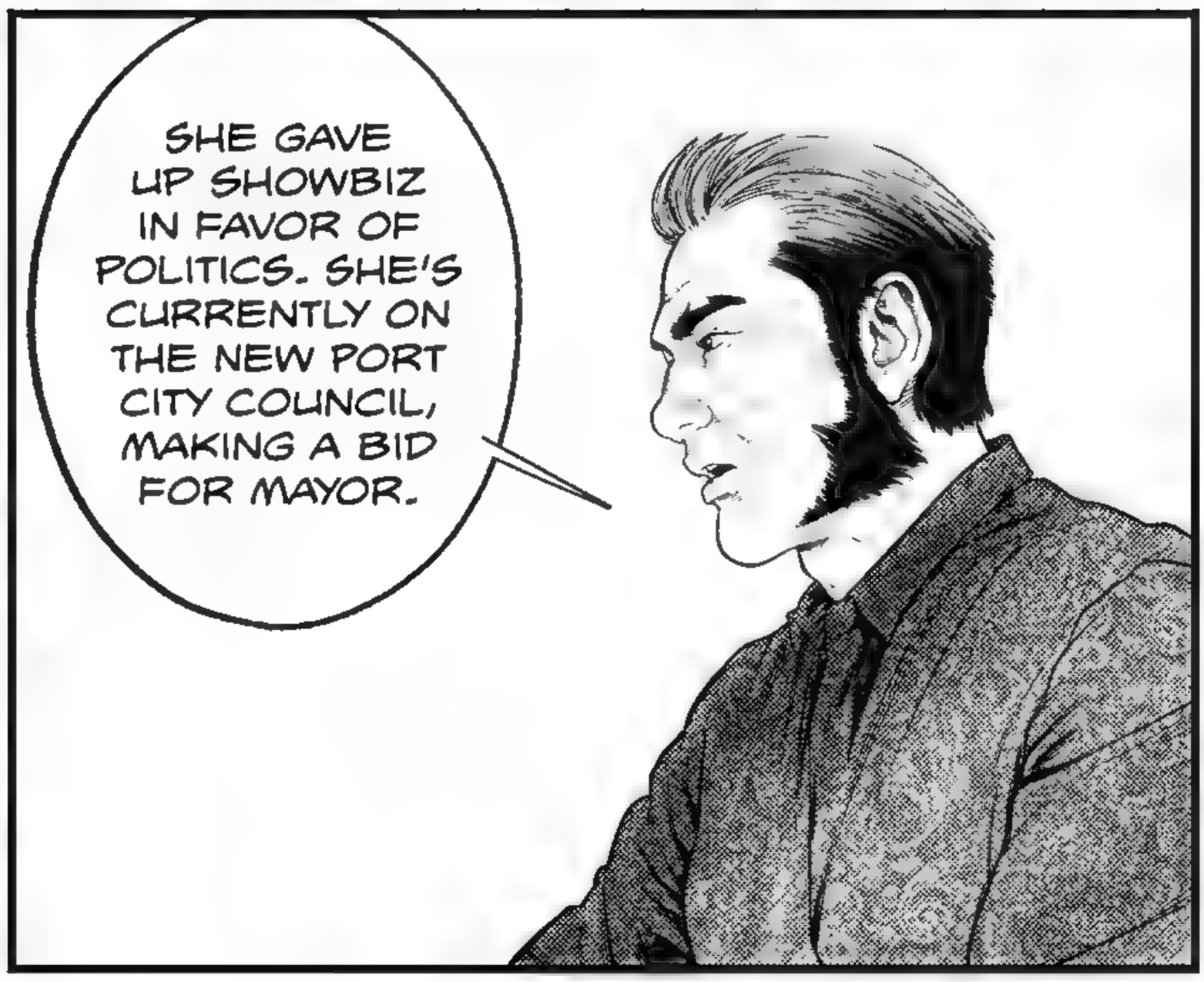
...WITH ALL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES SET TO WIND UP THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW.



...IS MARI'S BIOLOGICAL SISTER?
YOU'RE TELLING ME THIS WOMAN...

WOW... SHE'S VERY PRETTY. SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE MARI.
HUH?! SHE USED TO BE AN ACTRESS ?!
THAT'S RIGHT.
I PROMISED MYSELF I'D TELL YOU SOMEDAY. WITH YOUR PROMOTION TO HEAD MECHANIC AT OSAKI, I FIGURE NOW'S THE TIME.

TALK ABOUT ELITE!
AND IT SAYS HERE THAT OSAKI IS BACKING HER CAMPAIGN.


SHE GAVE UP SHOWBIZ IN FAVOR OF POLITICS. SHE'S CURRENTLY ON THE NEW PORT CITY COUNCIL, MAKING A BID FOR MAYOR.

S-SURE. IF I CAN.
GREAT. THEN I'VE GOT A FAVOR TO ASK.
WHAT IS IT?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET HER?

HUH ?!

I WANT YOU TO KILL HER.

SHE'S A TRAITOR.

SHE'S BUILDING TIES WITH THE CONTINENTALISTS.

SHE WANTS TO SERVE UP ATERUI'S SECRETS TO CURRY FAVOR.

WITH CHINA ...?

...!

AND THAT'S NOT ALL.

I ASSUME YOU KNOW WHO TOMARU OTOMO IS?

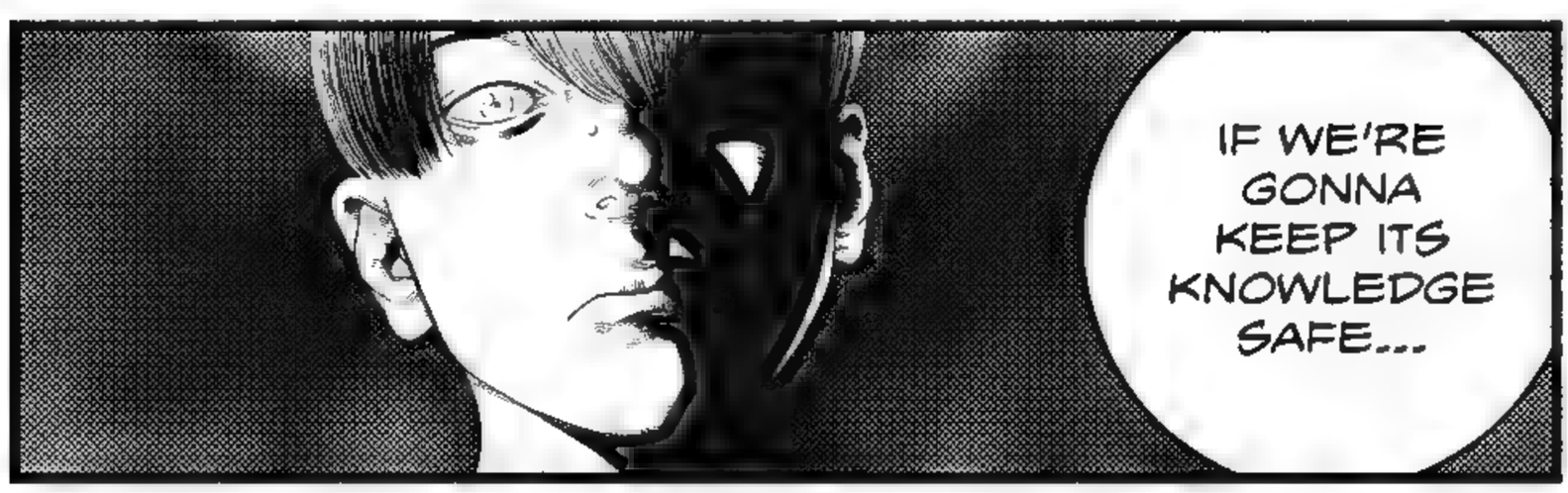
Y-YEAH. OF COURSE.

SHINRA'S IN LEAGUE WITH HIM.

TOGETHER, THEY'RE MANEUVERING TO PUT YOMOTSU'S TECHNOLOGY UP FOR SALE.

SLAM
WE CAN'T JUST STAND BY AND LET THIS HAPPEN!

AND WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN.
TO YOU AND ME, YOMOTSU IS FAMILY.


IF WE'RE GONNA KEEP ITS KNOWLEDGE SAFE...

BUT, DAD...

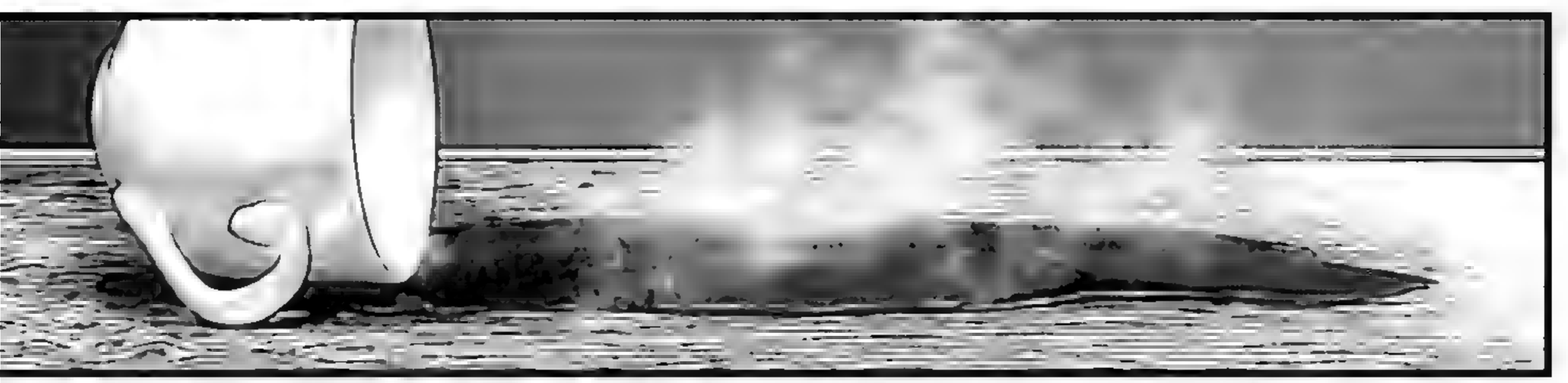
...THE ONLY CHOICE IS TO GO TO WAR.

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW.

DAD...
CLENCH...
WILL COUNCILOR MIKOMOTO MANAGE TO SECURE THE VOTES SHE NEEDS?

THAT'S THE DAY.

THAT'S WHEN ALL OF THIS COMES TO AN END.



MARK MY WORDS. YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS.

YOU BAS-TARD.
HOW COULD YOU DESTROY YOMOTSU?

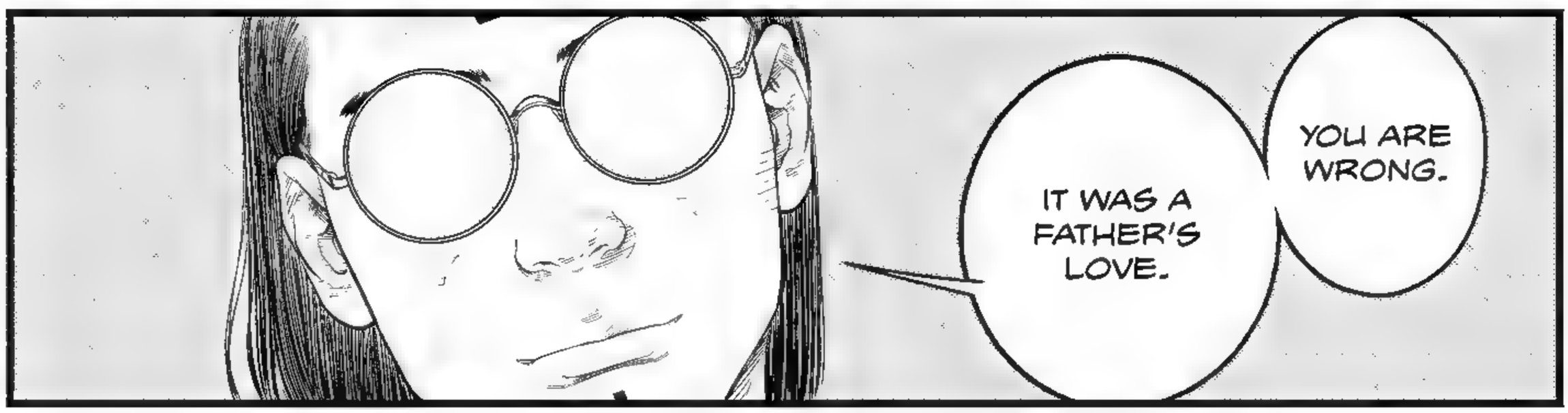
AHA HA HA!
...IS THE GRUDGE MY SOUL SHALL BEAR UPON THE LIVING.

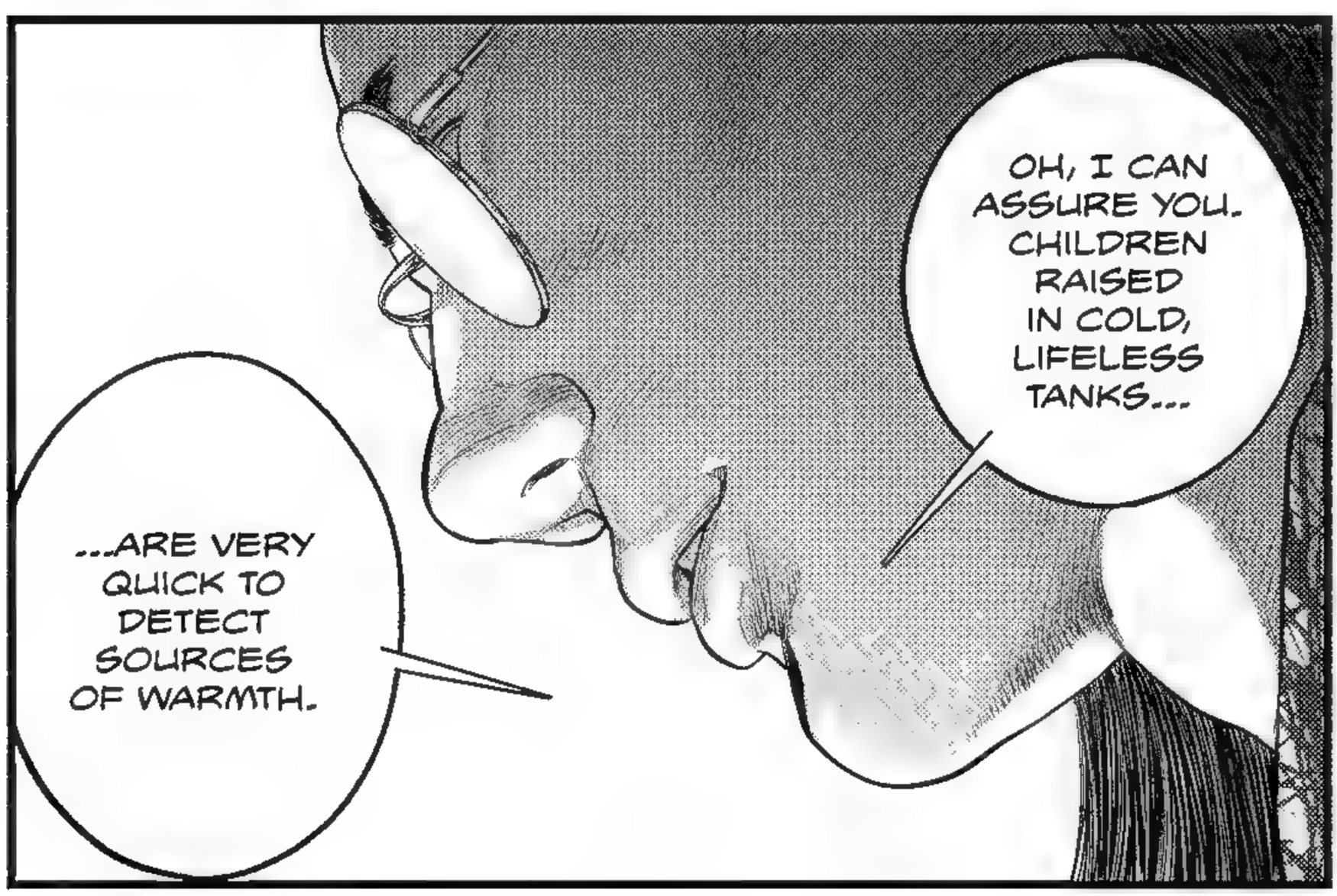
MY LIFE WAS ALREADY OVER THE MOMENT I LOST MY FAMILY AT ATERUI.
THE ONLY THING LEFT FOR ME...

YOU REALLY ARE A MONSTER.

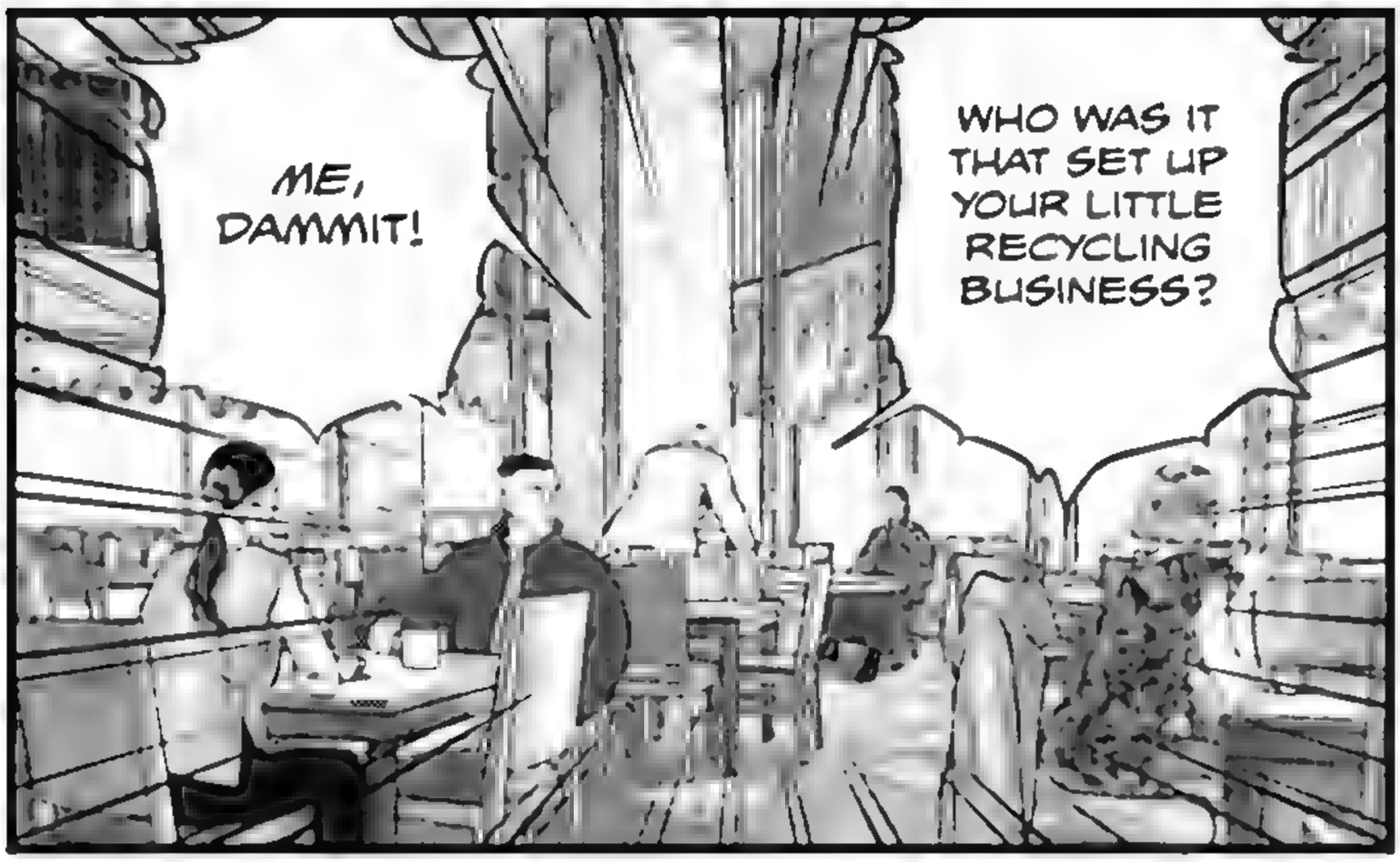
YOU KNOW WHY?
BECAUSE THE BASTARD SAW HOW MUCH HE HAD TO GAIN FROM WINNING YOUR TRUST.

HMHM...
IT IS THANKS TO ADEPT HASHIKAMI THAT I AM HUMAN. HE WAS THE ONE KIND ENOUGH TO RAISE US AS SUCH.


YOU ARE WRONG.
IT WAS A FATHER'S LOVE.


OH, I CAN ASSURE YOU. CHILDREN RAISED IN COLD, LIFELESS TANKS...
...ARE VERY QUICK TO DETECT SOURCES OF WARMTH.

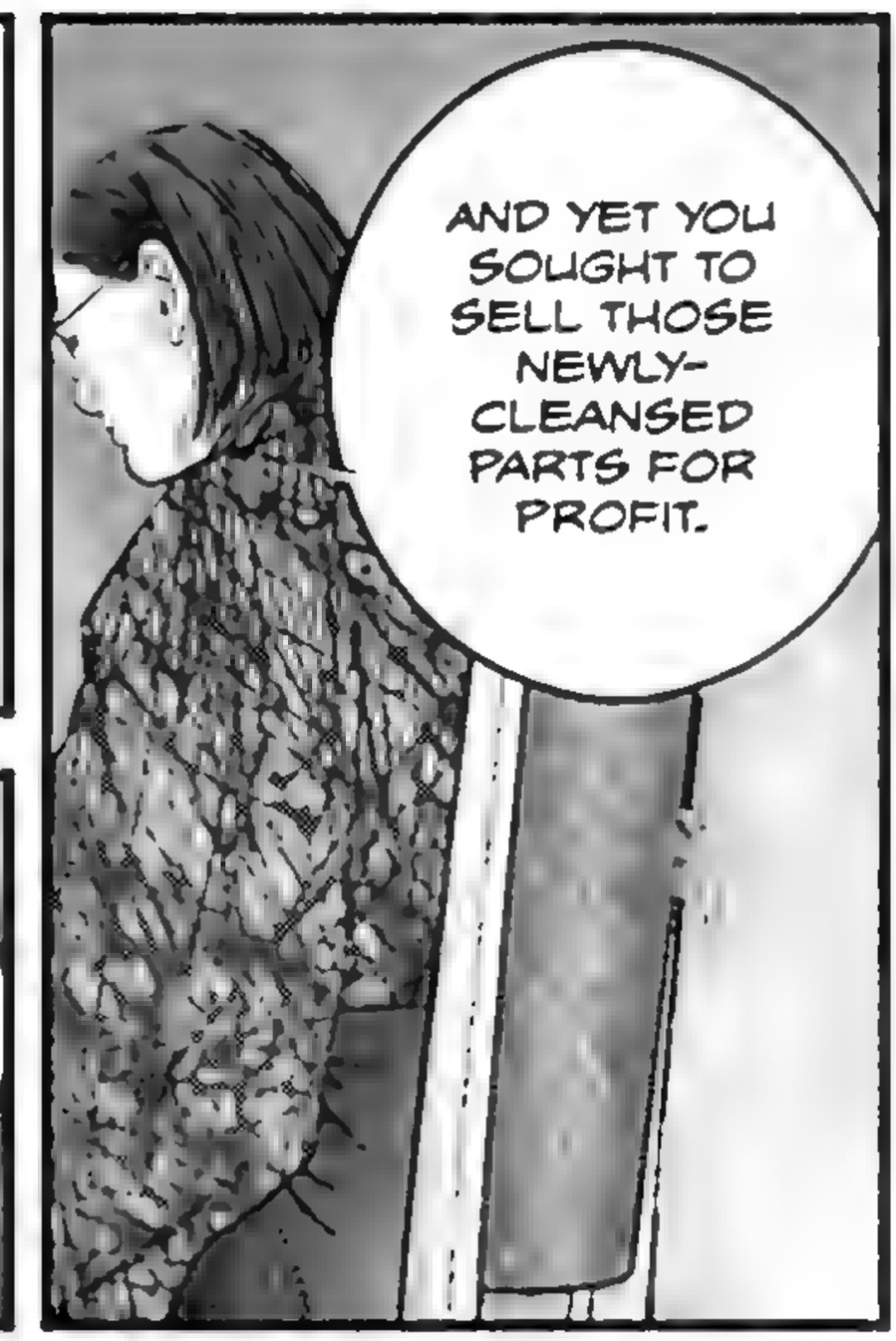
LOVE?
DON'T GIVE ME THAT SHIT.


ME, DAMMIT!
WHO WAS IT THAT SET UP YOUR LITTLE RECYCLING BUSINESS?

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING I DID FOR YOUR DAMN CULT?!
WHAM!

...IS THE FOREMOST TEACHING OF ATERUI. IT IS OUR PURPOSE.
THE PURIFICATION OF VENERABLE PROSTHETICS THAT ARE NO LONGER IN USE...

I PAID YOU *TWICE* THE GOING RATE FOR YOUR WORK.


AND YET YOU SOUGHT TO SELL THOSE NEWLY-CLEANSED PARTS FOR PROFIT.

YES. AND A BONUS IN *LEAD*.

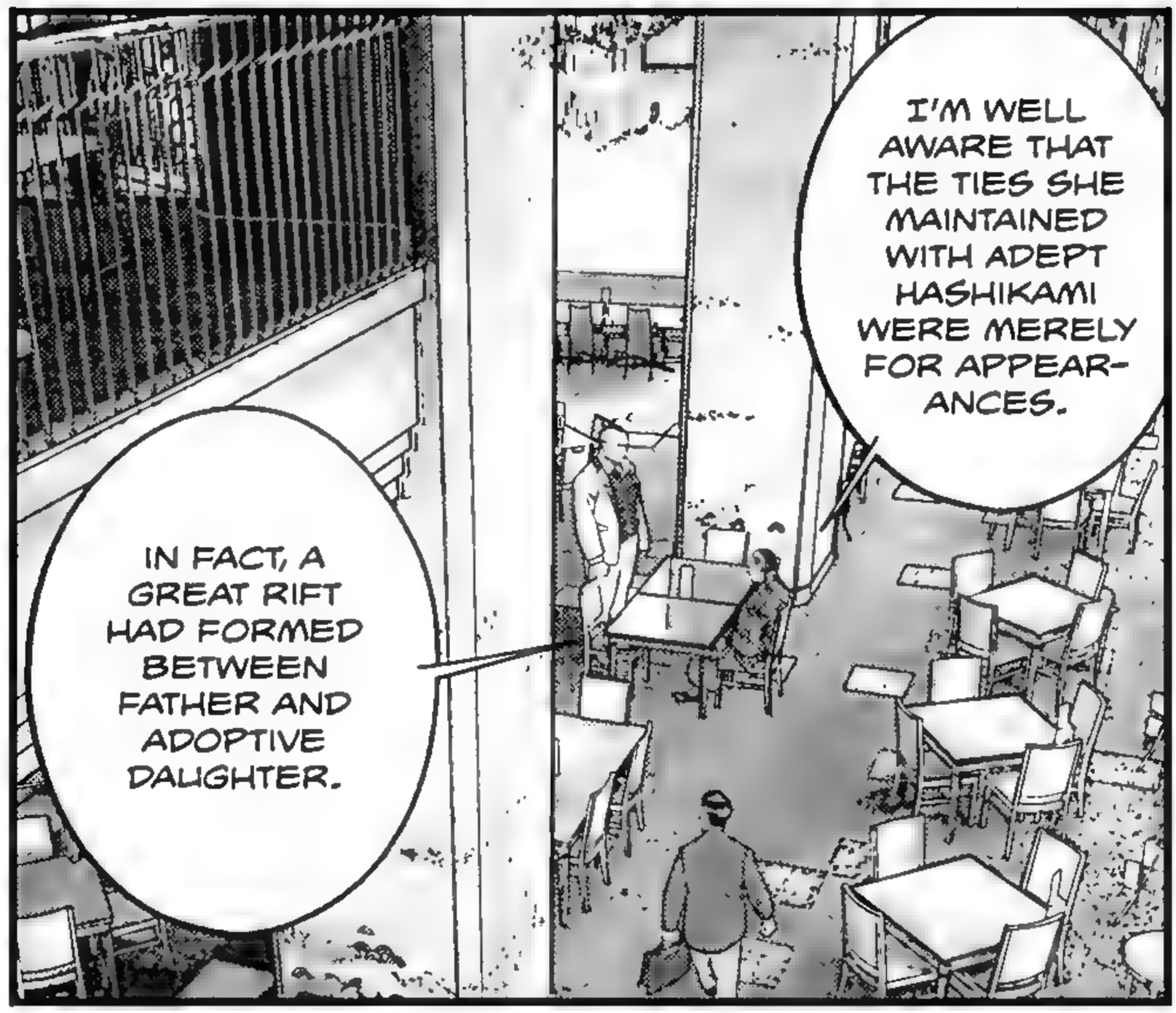
HMMMM-
HM....

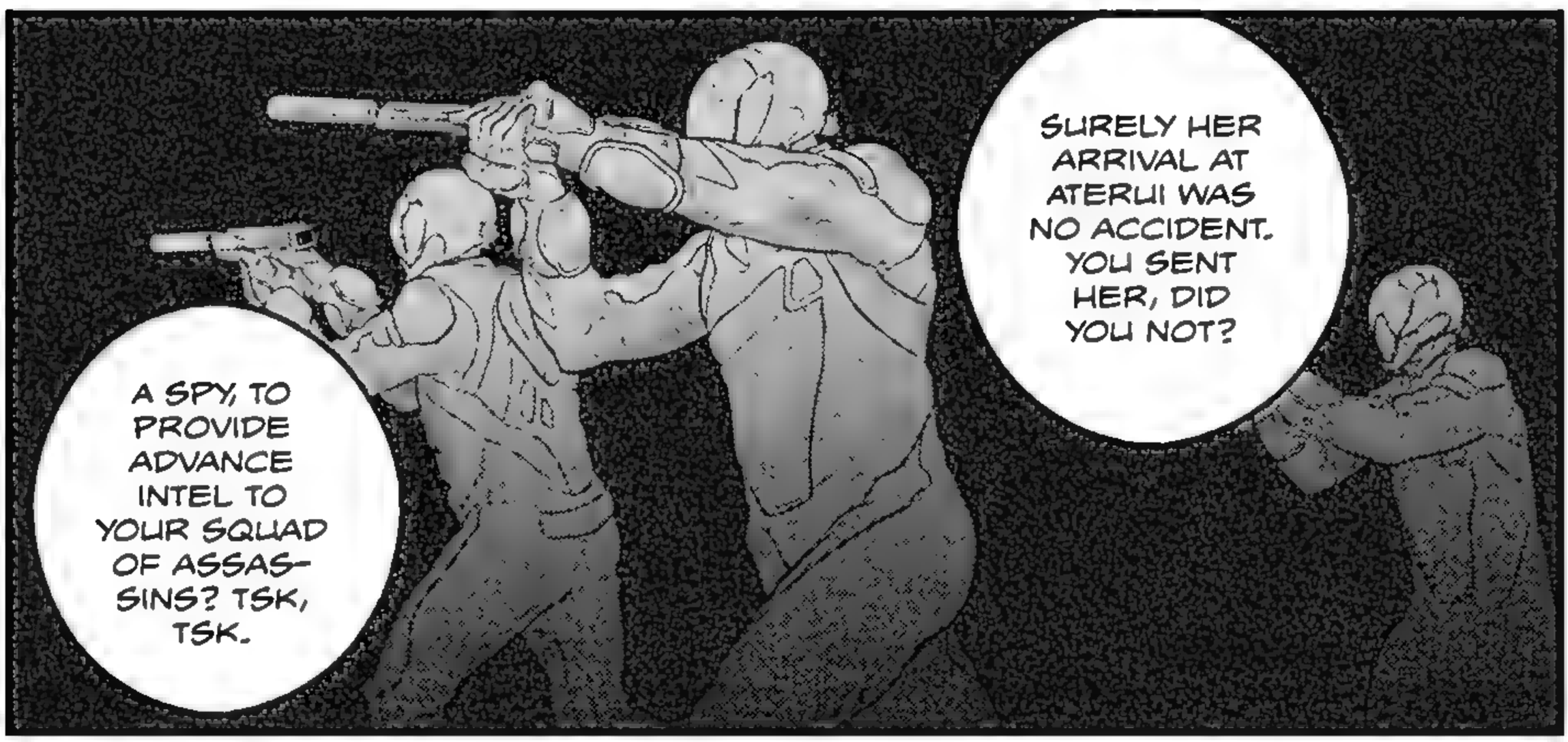
MR. OTOMO AND ADEPT HASHIKAMI—
THE TWO FOUNDERS OF YOMOTSU.
BROTHERS BY BLOOD, AND YET QUITE DIFFERENT IN THE WAYS THEY EXPRESS THEIR LOVE.

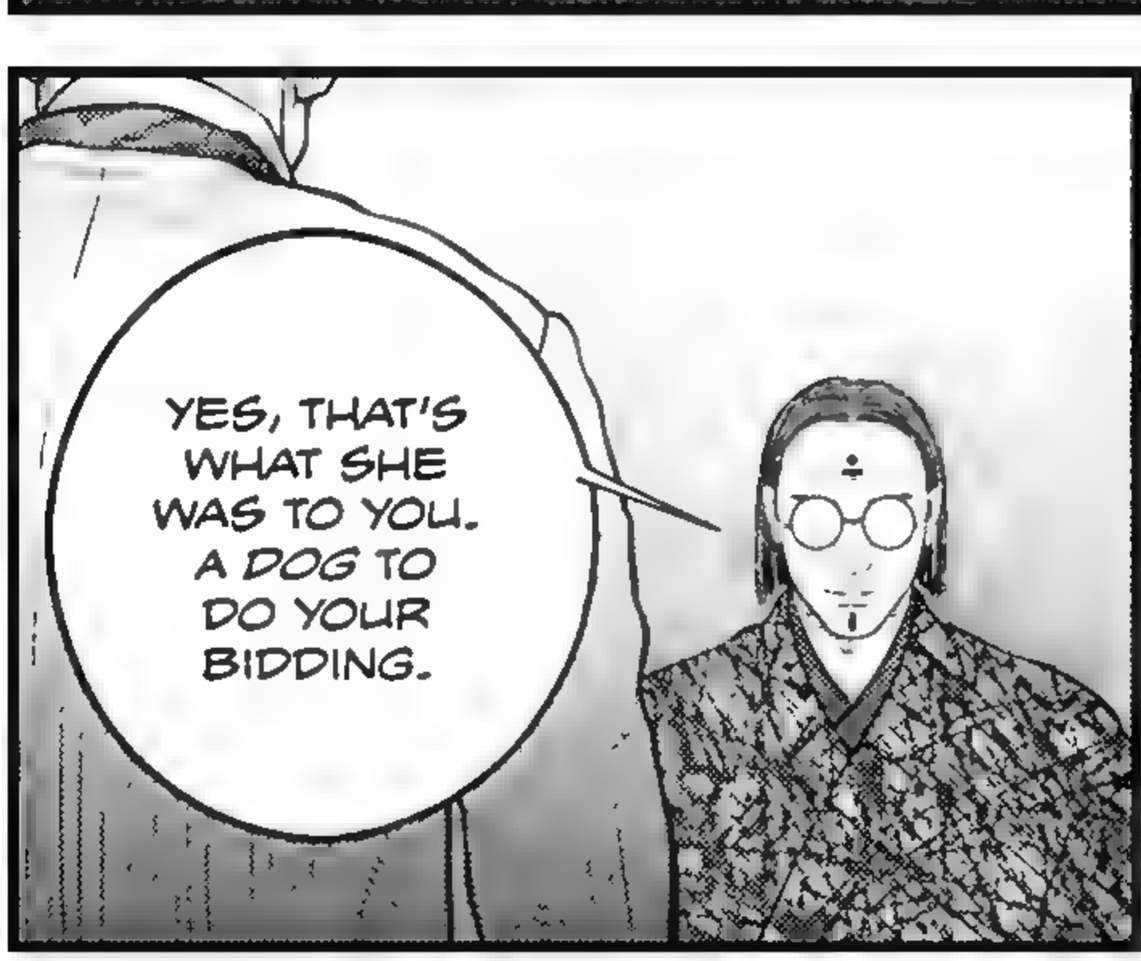
AND WHO COULD FORGET DEAR MARI?
SHE IS GUILTY OF THE SAME CRIME AS YOU.

...

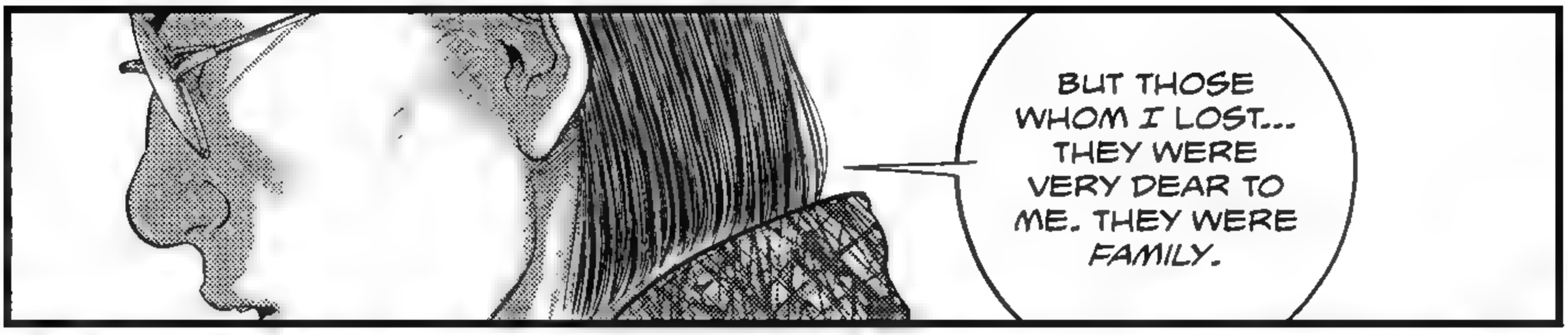
HOW VERY LIKE YOU TO EXPLOIT IT.

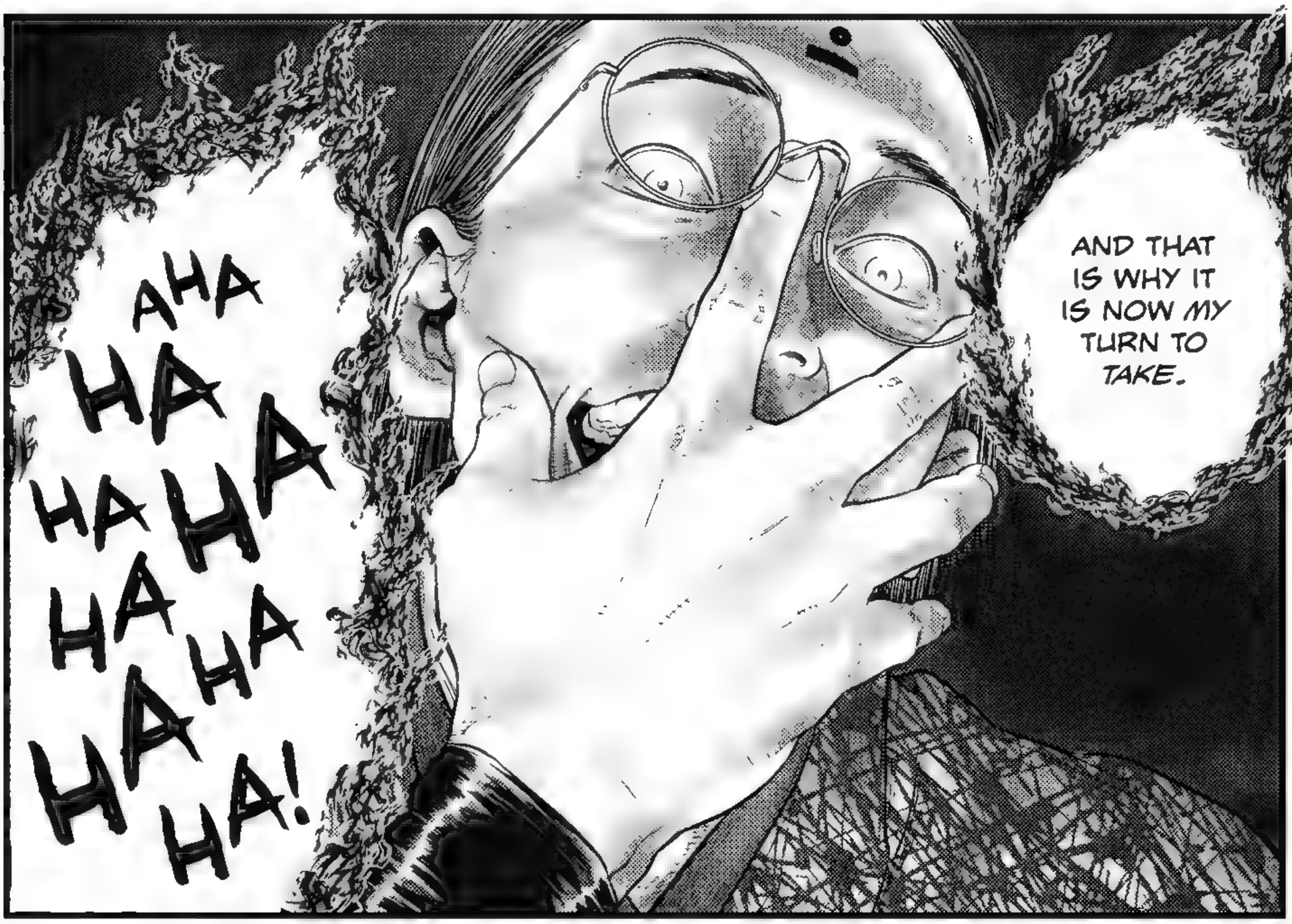

IN FACT, A GREAT RIFT HAD FORMED BETWEEN FATHER AND ADOPTIVE DAUGHTER.
I'M WELL AWARE THAT THE TIES SHE MAINTAINED WITH ADEPT HASHIKAMI WERE MERELY FOR APPEARANCES.

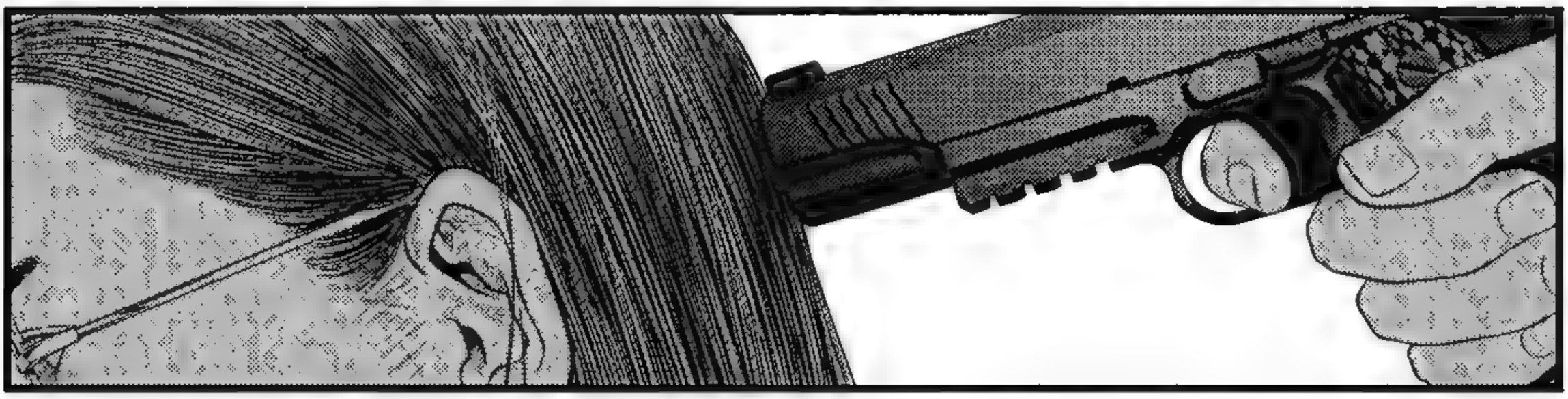

A SPY, TO PROVIDE ADVANCE INTEL TO YOUR SQUAD OF ASSASSINS? TSK, TSK.
SURELY HER ARRIVAL AT ATERUI WAS NO ACCIDENT. YOU SENT HER, DID YOU NOT?


YES, THAT'S WHAT SHE WAS TO YOU. A DOG TO DO YOUR BIDDING.

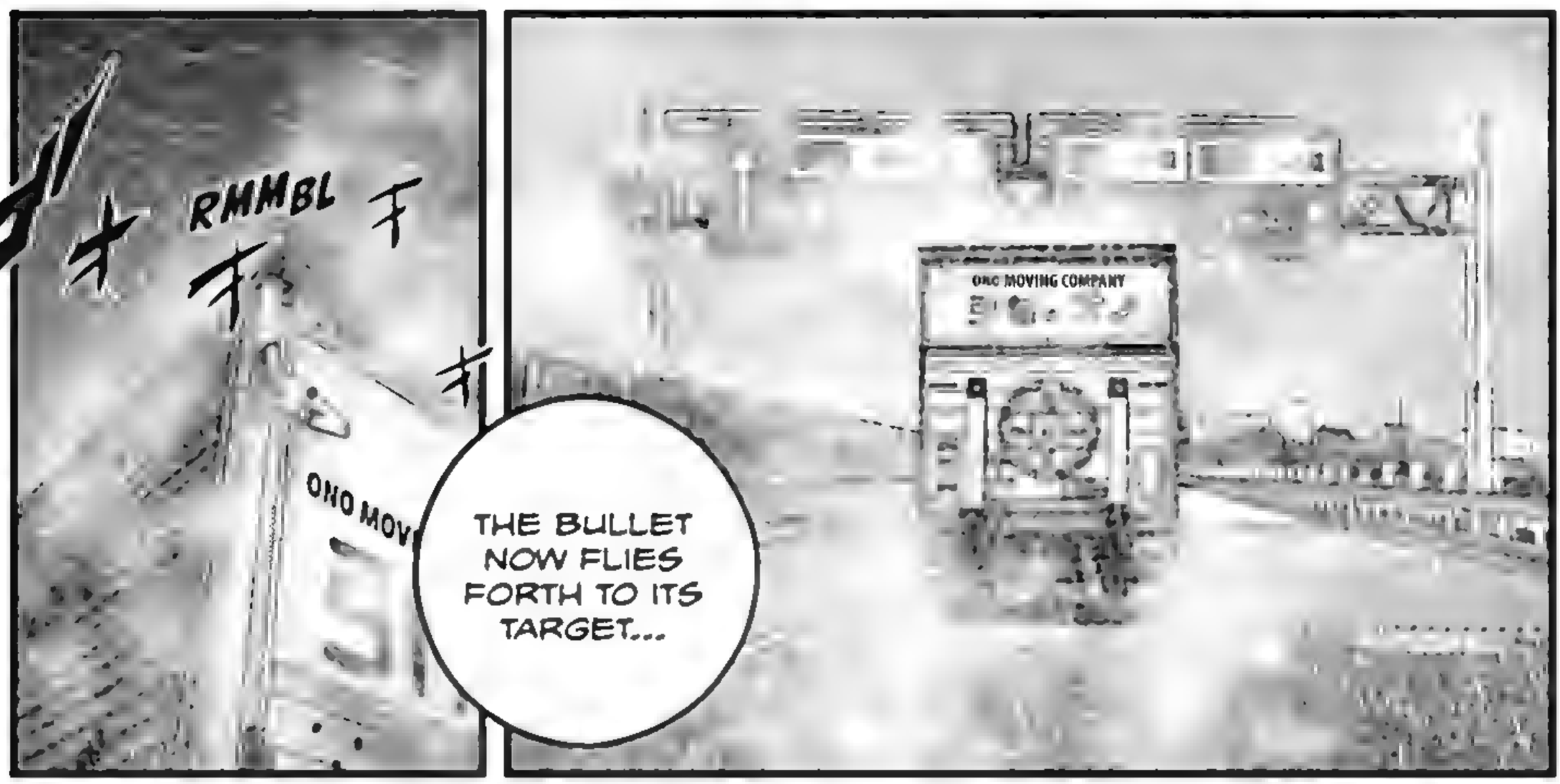
LOOK WHO'S TALKING. YOU KILLED THE BITCH.


BUT THOSE WHOM I LOST... THEY WERE VERY DEAR TO ME. THEY WERE FAMILY.


AHA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
AND THAT IS WHY IT IS NOW MY TURN TO TAKE.



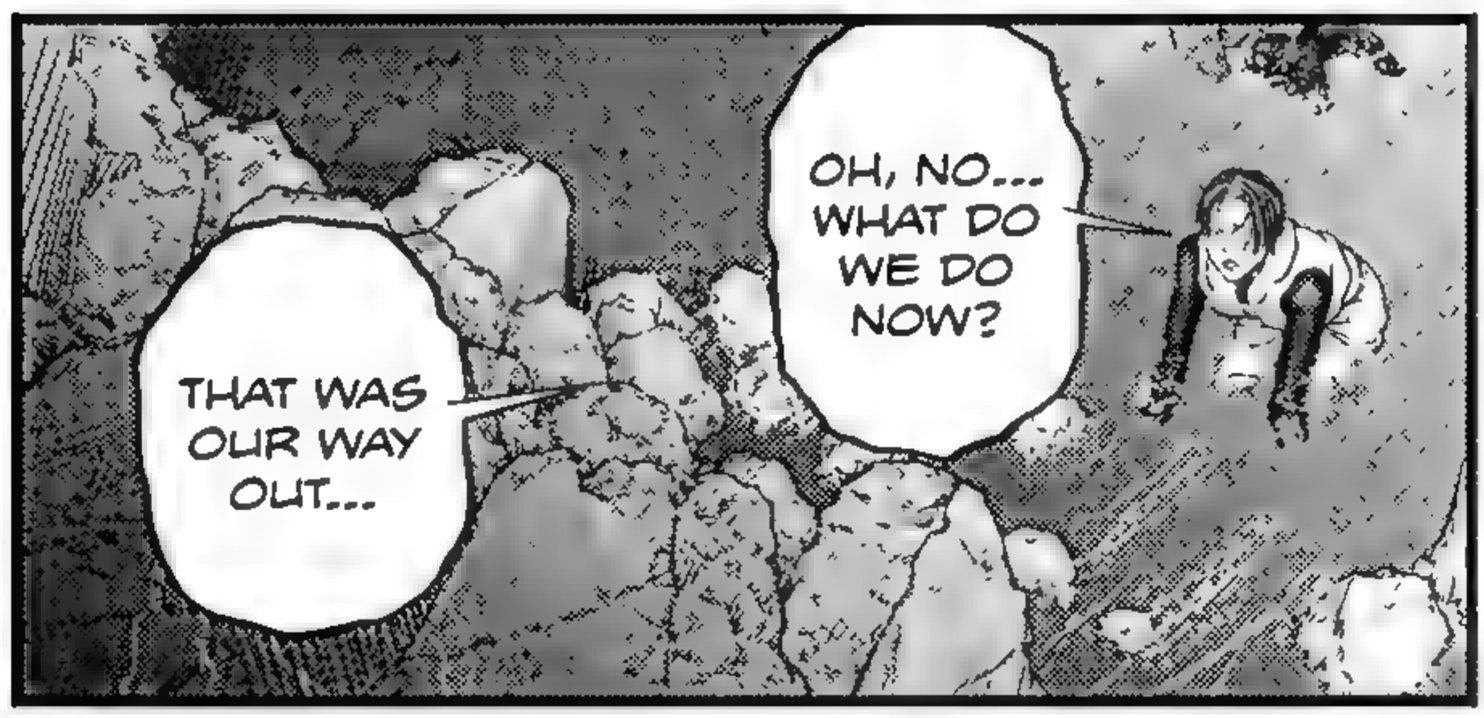
LAST CHANCE, WAKAL.
I SUGGEST YOU COOPERATE.

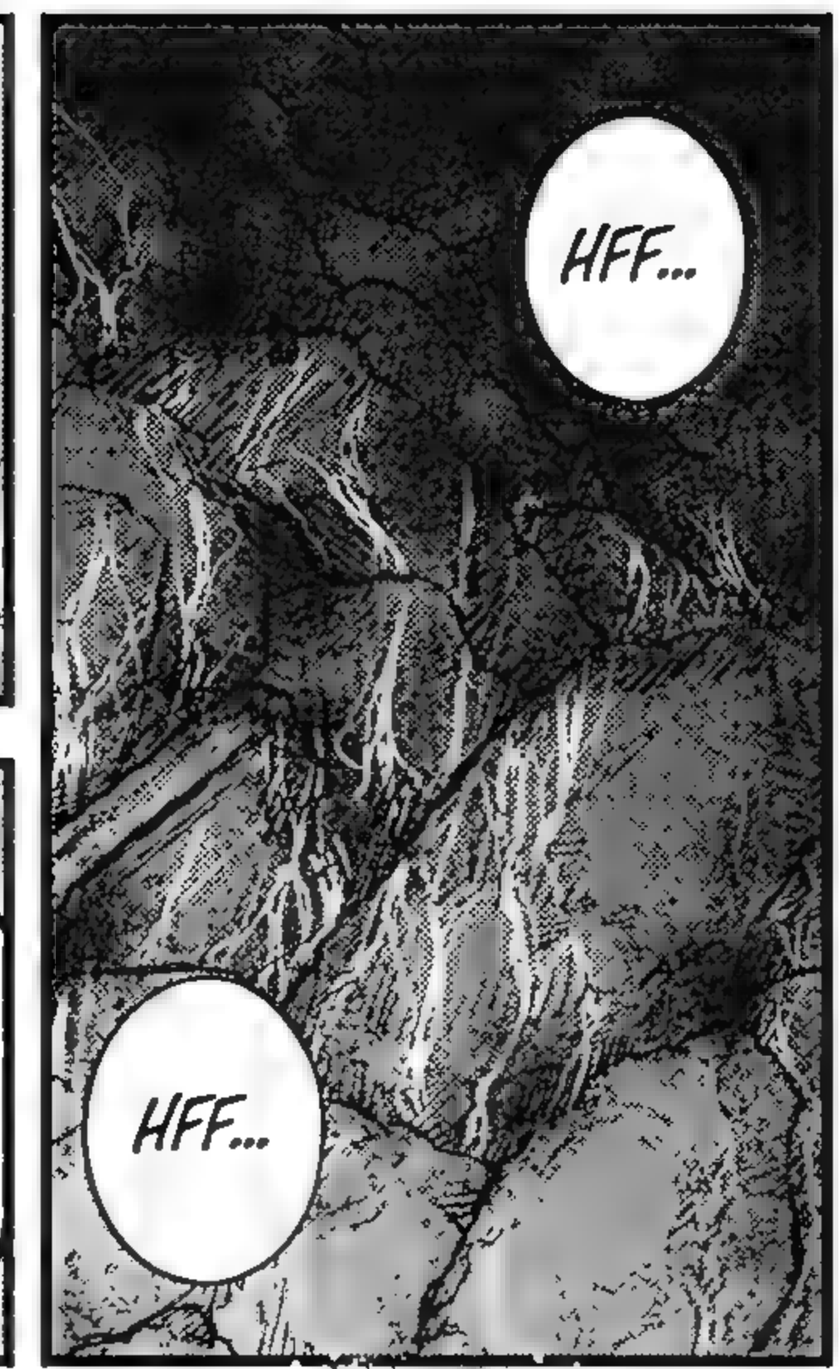


SIGNS: TO NIIHAMA

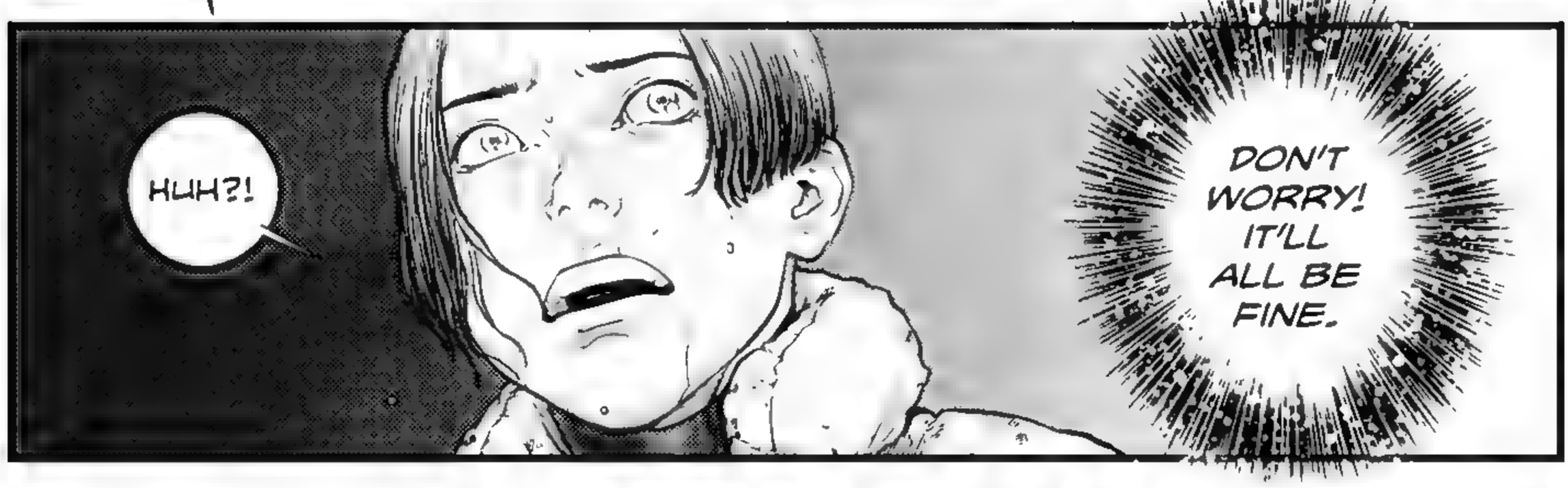
...AND THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN STOP IT.

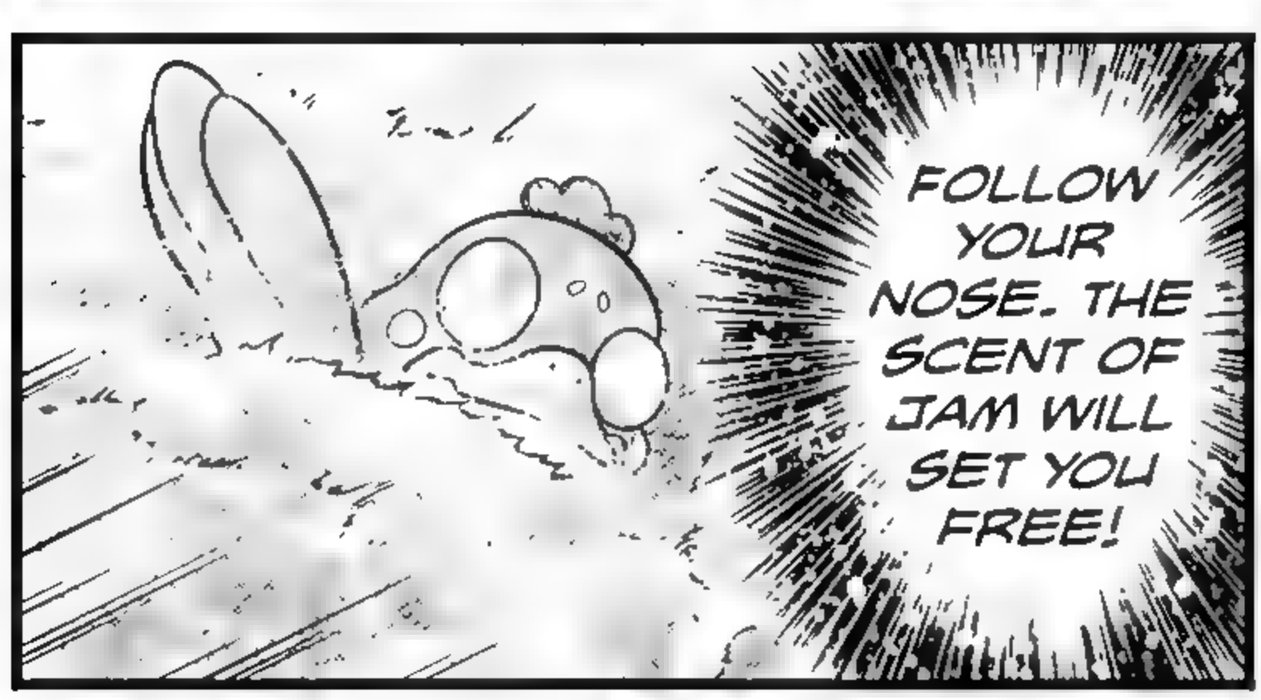
15
OPEN MEMORY BOX

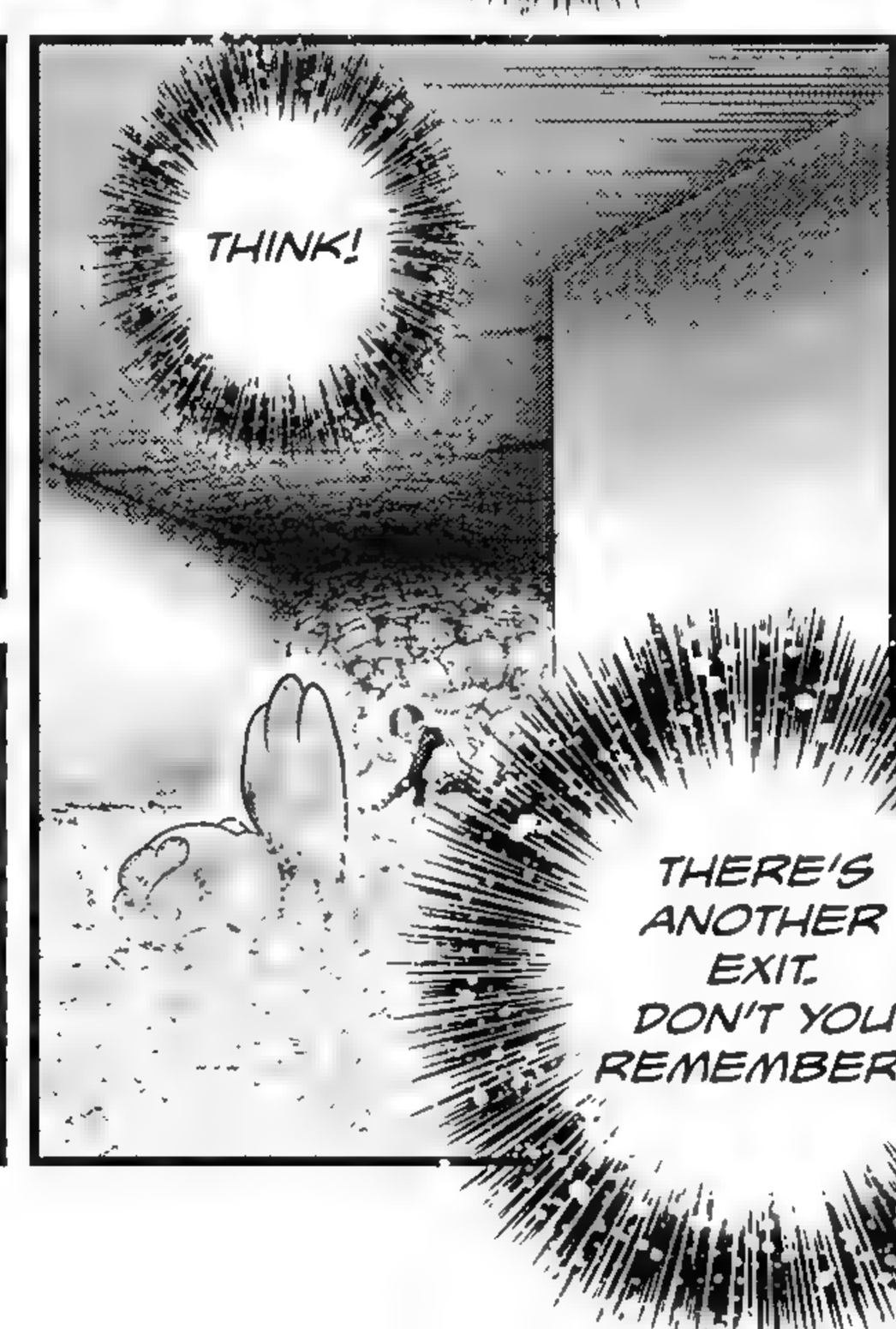

THAT WAS OUR WAY OUT...
OH, NO... WHAT DO WE DO NOW?


HFF...
HFF...

FRSH
...AND THE WATER LEVEL'S RISING FAST.


HUH?!
DON'T WORRY! IT'LL ALL BE FINE.


FOLLOW YOUR NOSE. THE SCENT OF JAM WILL SET YOU FREE!


THINK!
THERE'S ANOTHER EXIT. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

JAM...?

SHHRP
HM? WOULD YOU LIKE SOME, TOO, MR. DUCK?
HERE! HELP YOUR-SELF!
IT'S SOOO YUMMY!!
SPLK SPLK
MM!
SPLRCH
THERE YOU ARE.
HUH?
HEHE!

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE TAKING A NAP RIGHT NOW.

REMEMBER HOW WE TALKED ABOUT NOT WANDERING OFF?

ARE YOU LISTEN-ING?

C'MON, TSUNAGI. BACK TO YOUR ROOM.

LOOK, BEARY-BEAR! I'VE GOT JAM. WANT SOME?

BEARY-BEAR!

LUNGE

I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN YOU GET ANGRY.

SLIP

HRMPH!

YOU'RE BEING MEAN AGAIN, WAKAI-KAI.

CLINK

OOPS!

HUH ...?
BUT THERE AREN'T ANY YUCKIES COMING OFF OF IT.

WHOA, WHOA!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? DON'T EAT IT NOW!
WHY NOT?
IT'S BEEN ON THE FLOOR! IT'S DIRTY!

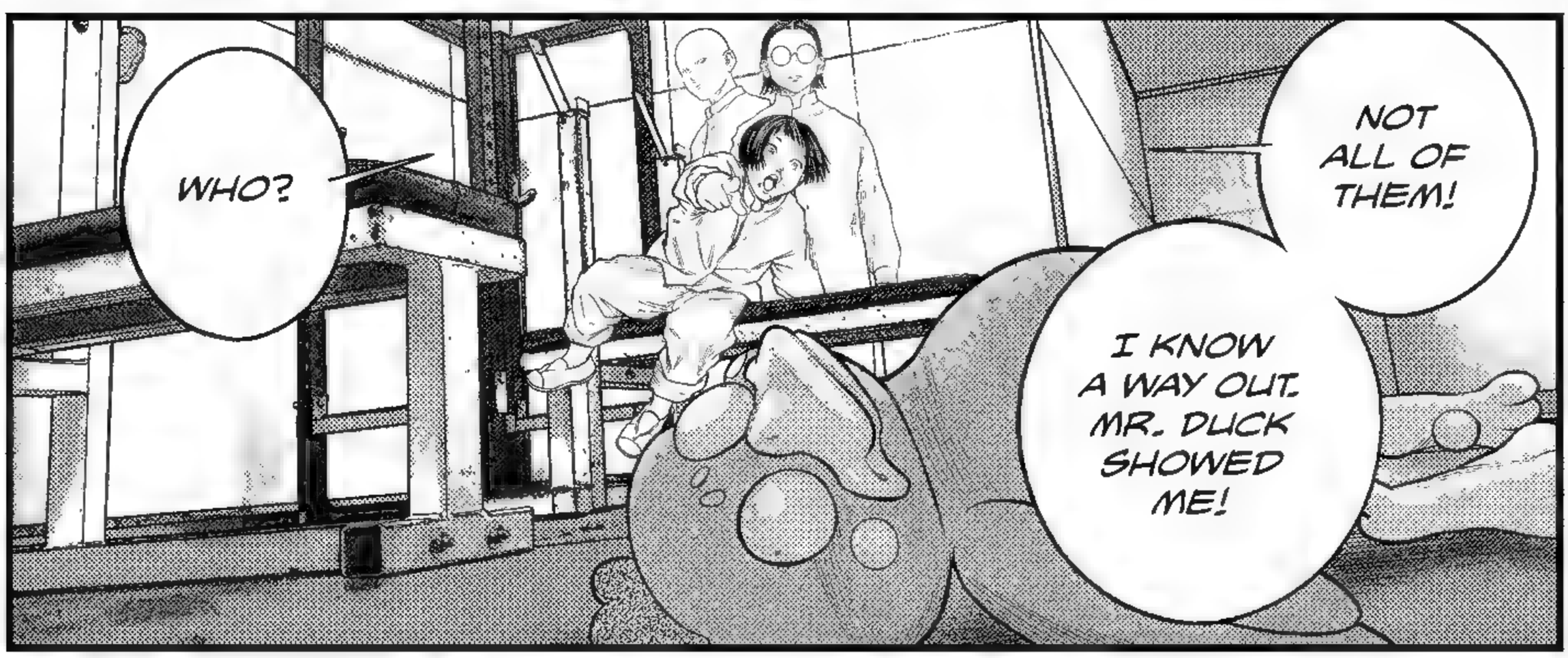
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

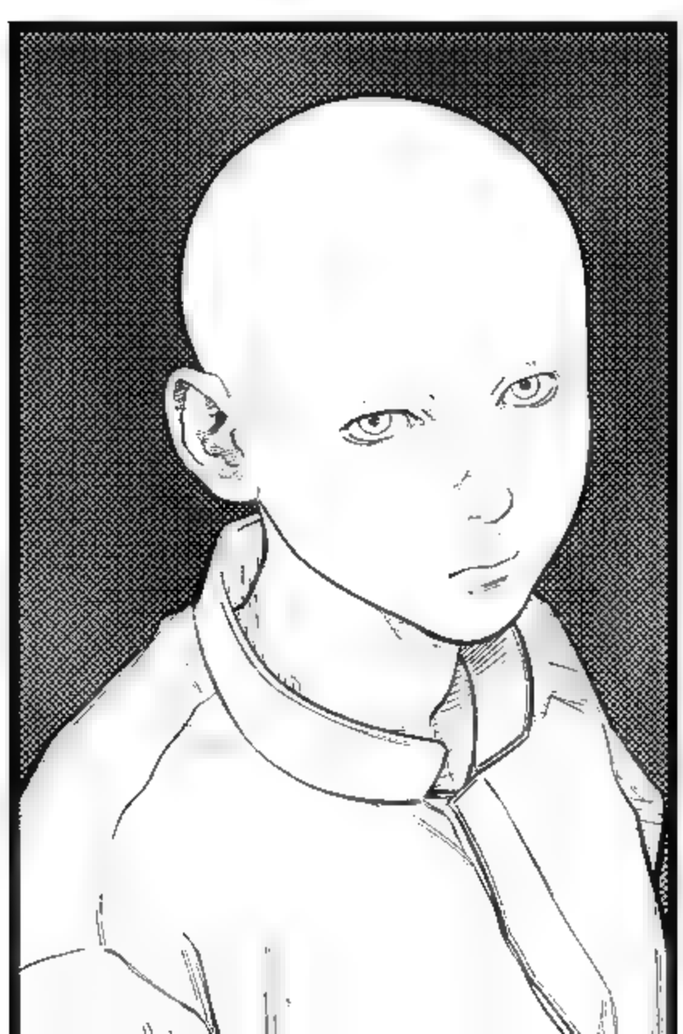
YEAH! ALL SQUIGGLY AND GROSS!
HEH. YOU SURE SAY THE DARNDEST THINGS, TSUNA—
NO! STOP! I TOLD YOU NOT TO EAT IT!
MMM!!

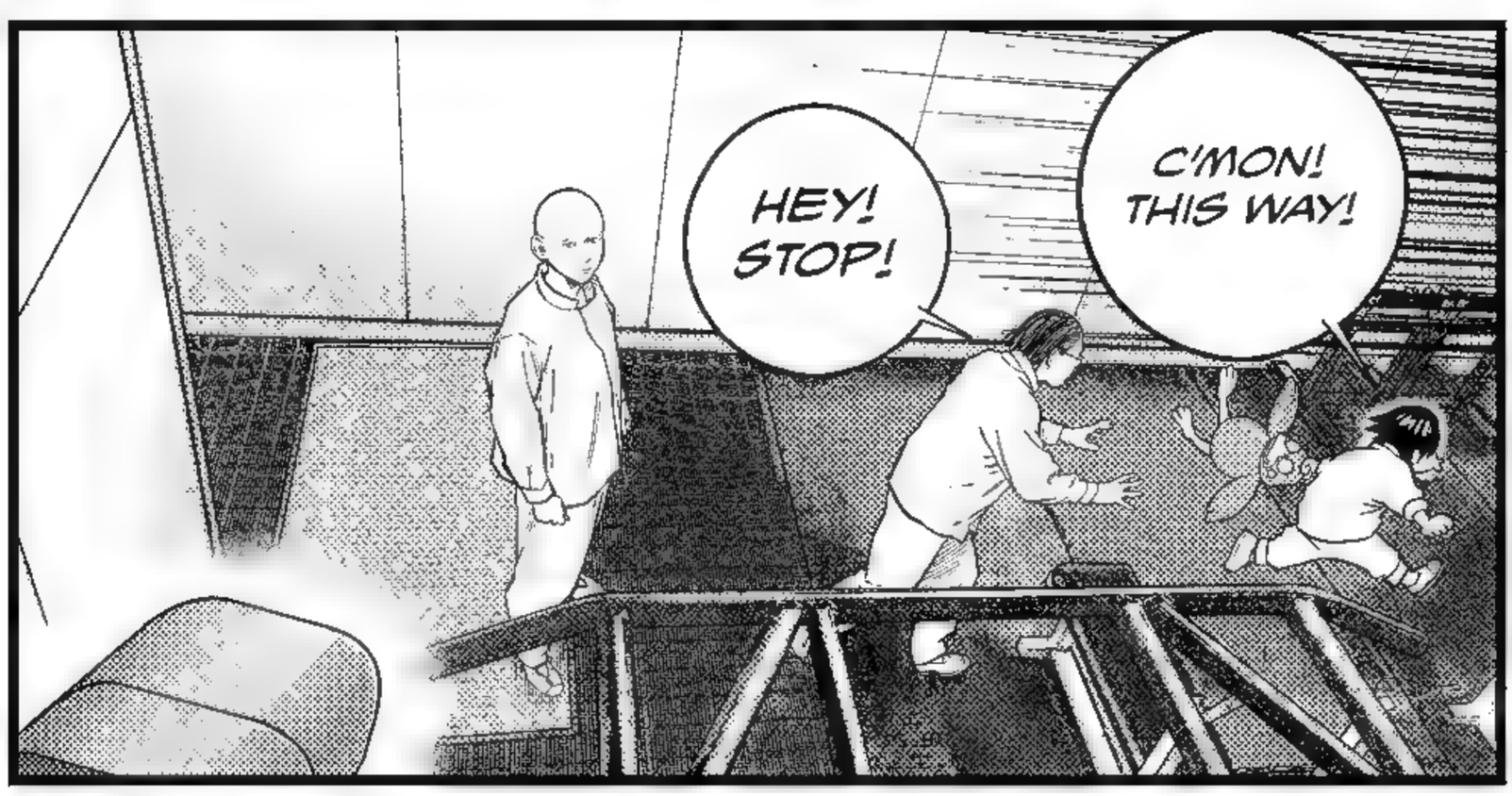
IF IT WERE DIRTY, THE YUCKY BLACK HAZE WOULD BE THERE.
BLACK... HAZE?

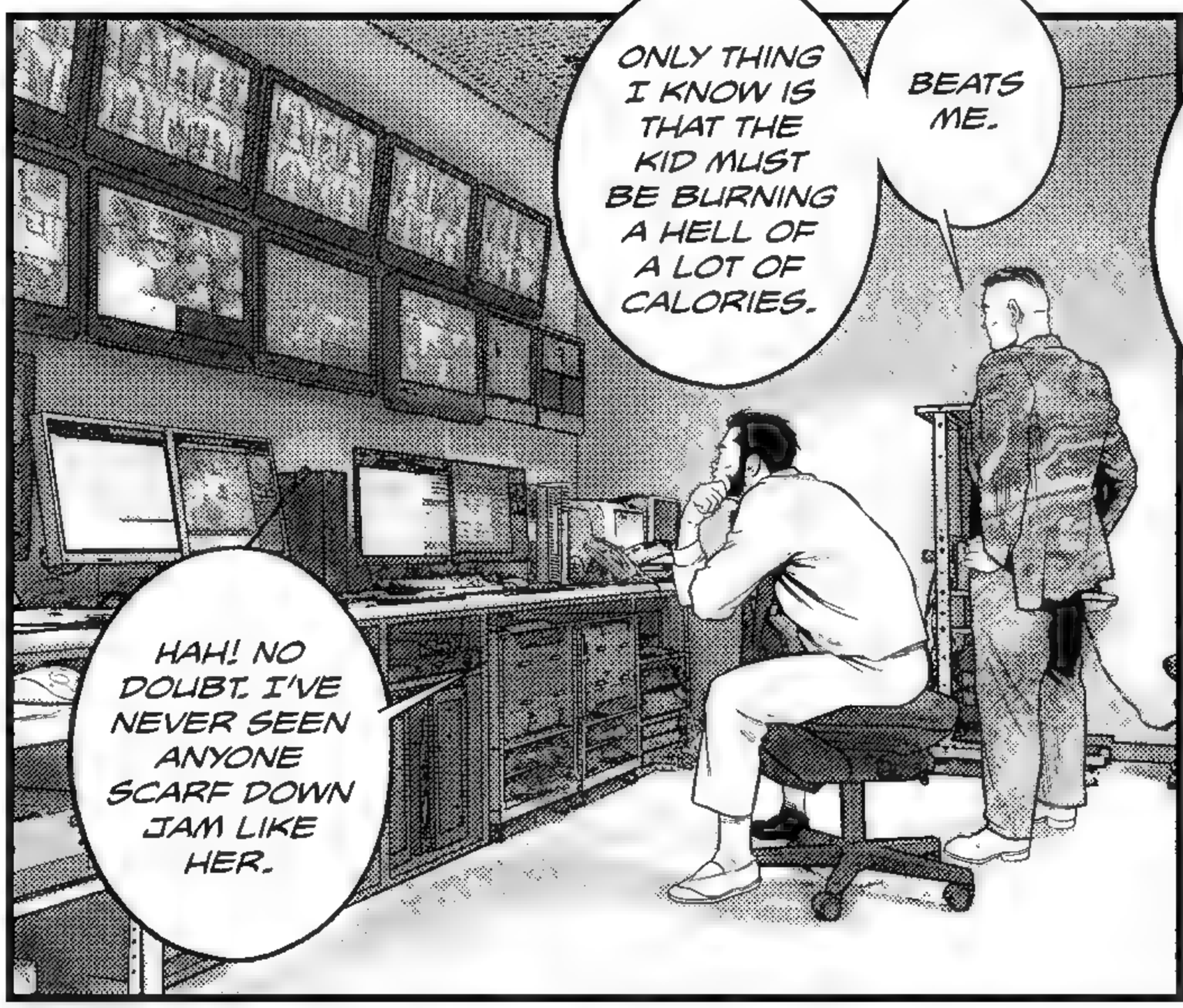
HUH? YOU KNOW WE CAN'T DO THAT.
WHY NOT?
WE'RE NOT ALLOWED. BESIDES, ALL THE EXITS ARE SEALED.

HEY! LET'S ALL PLAY OUTSIDE!


WHO?
NOT ALL OF THEM!
I KNOW A WAY OUT. MR. DUCK SHOWED ME!




HEY! STOP!
C'MON! THIS WAY!

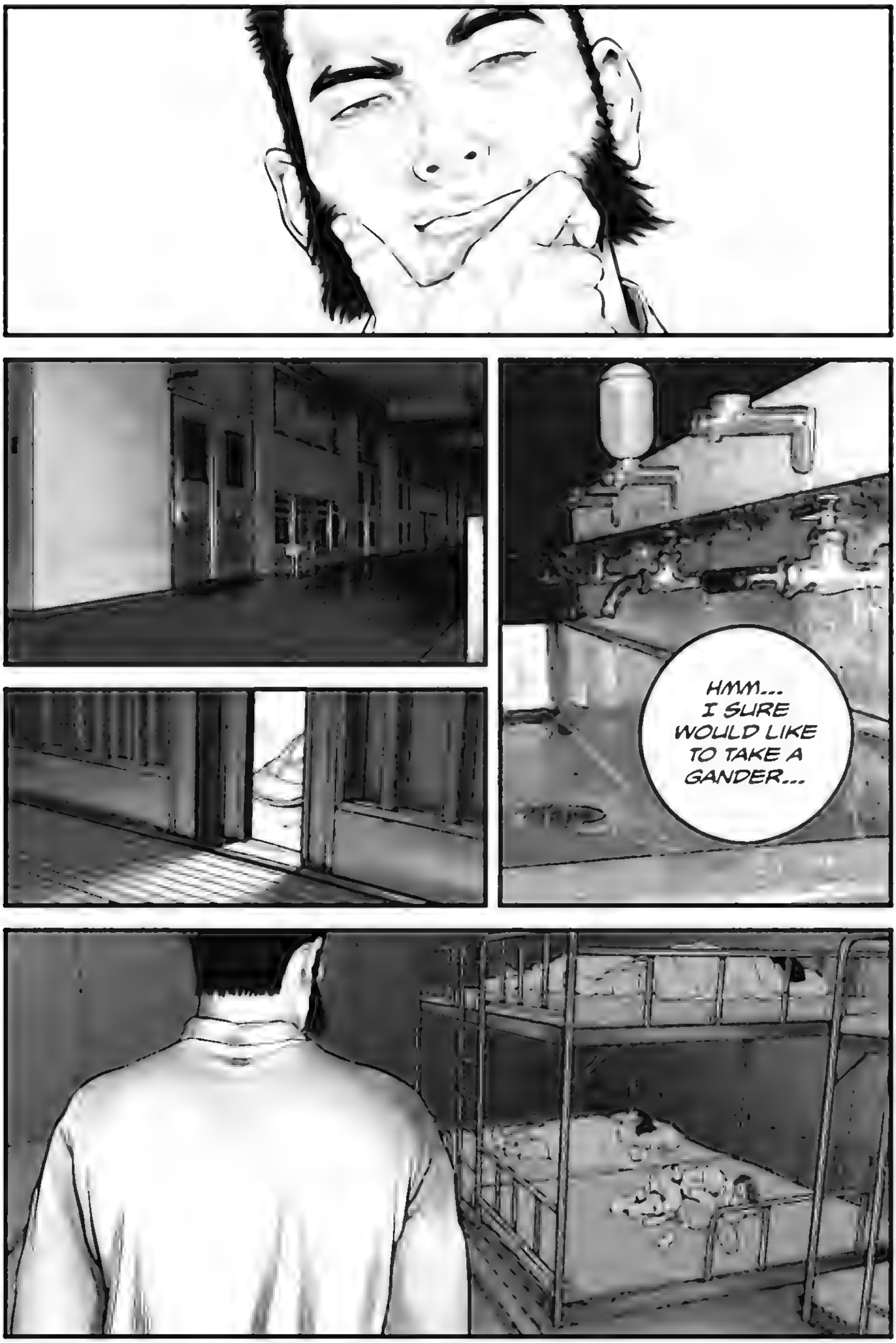

ONLY THING I KNOW IS THAT THE KID MUST BE BURNING A HELL OF A LOT OF CALORIES.
BEATS ME.
HAH! NO DOUBT. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE SCARF DOWN JAM LIKE HER.

HMM ...
WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS BLACK HAZE SHE'S TALKING ABOUT?

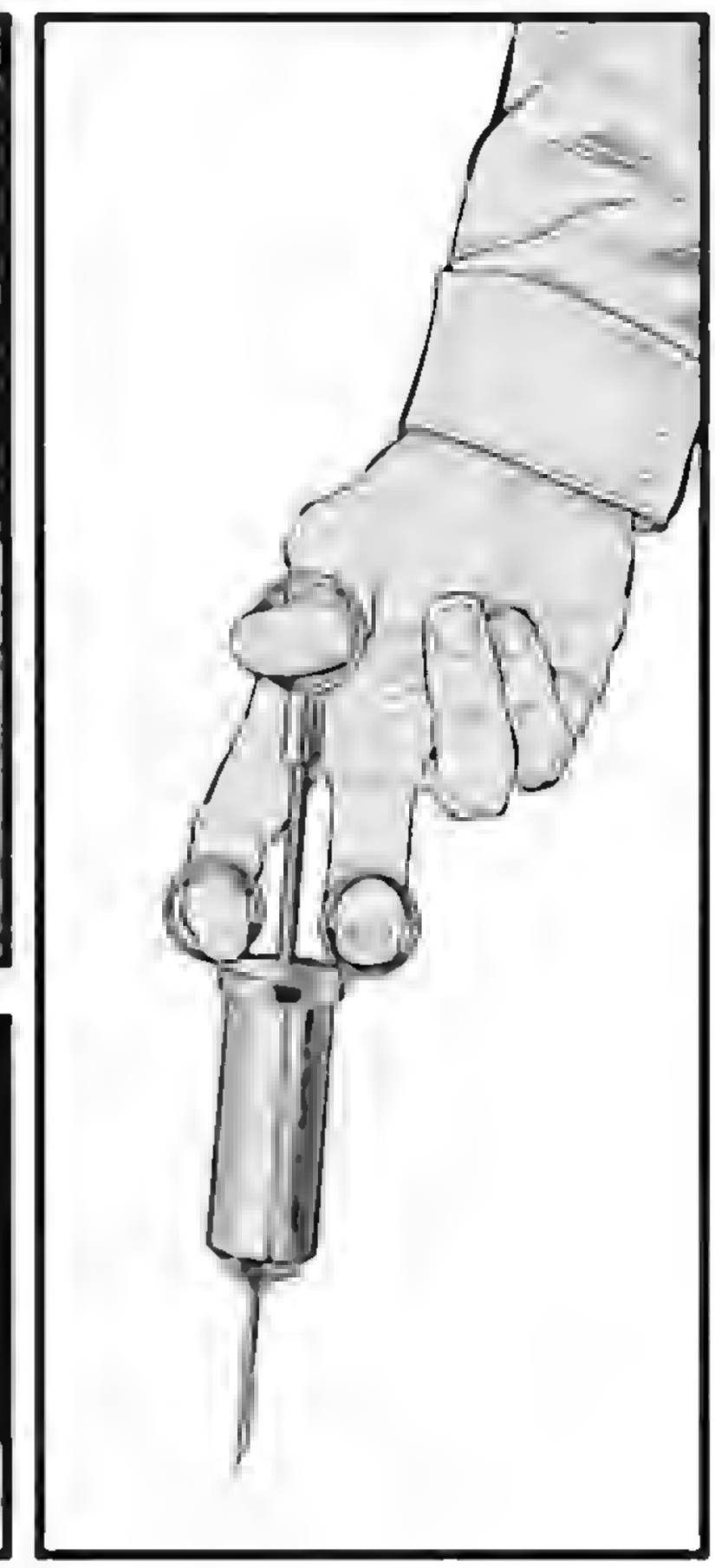
DON'T YOU DARE OPEN HER UP.
SHE'S FAR TOO VALU-ABLE. WE INTERCEPTED HER EN ROUTE TO THE CHANNELING AGENCY.
ANOTHER DAMN FINE SPECIMEN.
I WONDER WHAT KINDA ALGORITHM THAT BRAIN OF HERS IS RUNNING.

YOU BETTER GO CATCH 'EM BEFORE THEY RUN OFF.

YOU'VE GOT A ONE-TRACK MIND.
HOW ABOUT FOCUSING ON THE ISSUE AT HAND? THEY'RE HEADED OUTSIDE.
AWW. DON'T TELL ME YOU AREN'T AT LEAST A LITTLE CURIOUS.
I BET WE'D GET SOMETHING REAL SPECIAL OUT OF HER.
CREAK...


HMM...
I SURE
WOULD LIKE
TO TAKE A
GANDER...

CREEEAK...

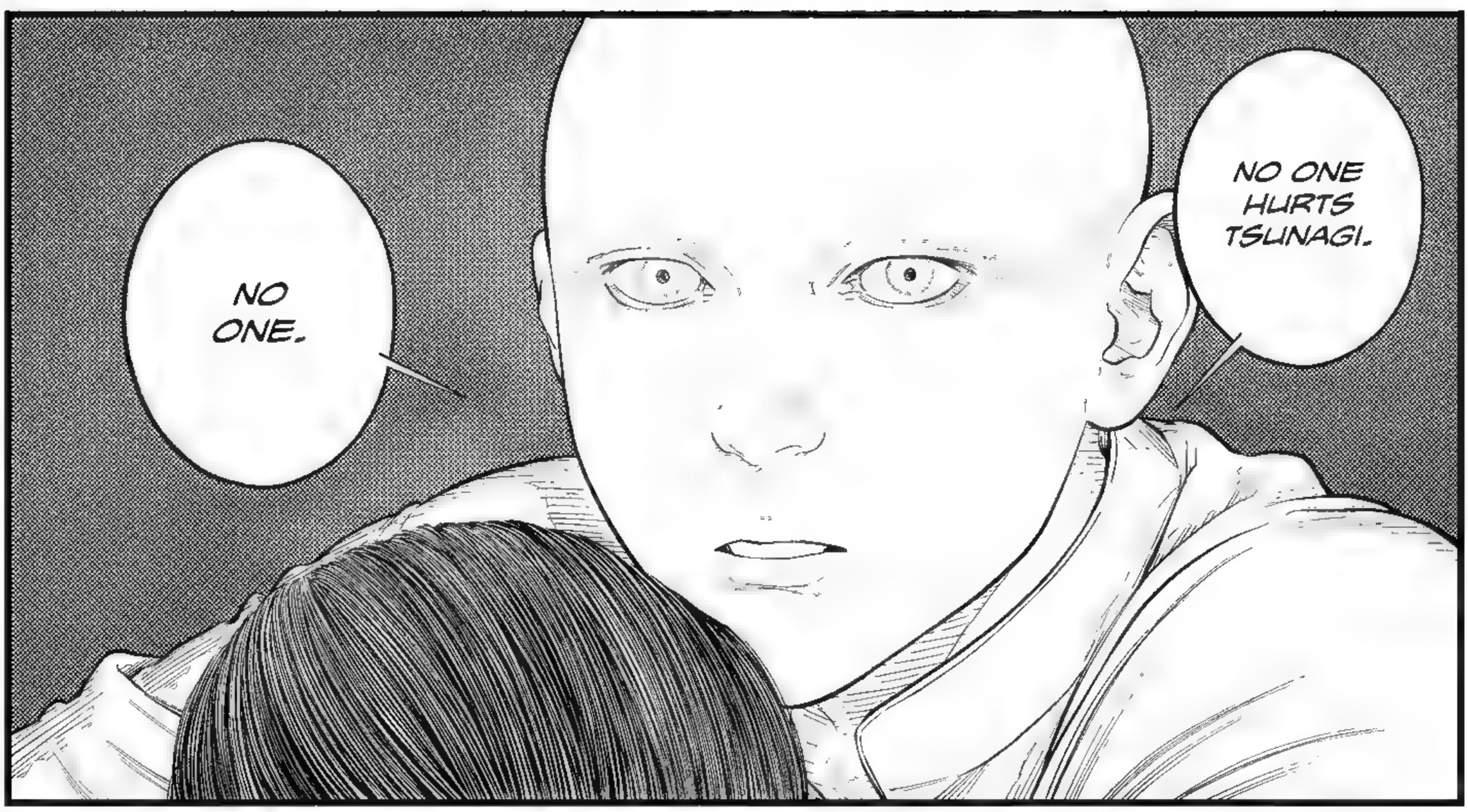


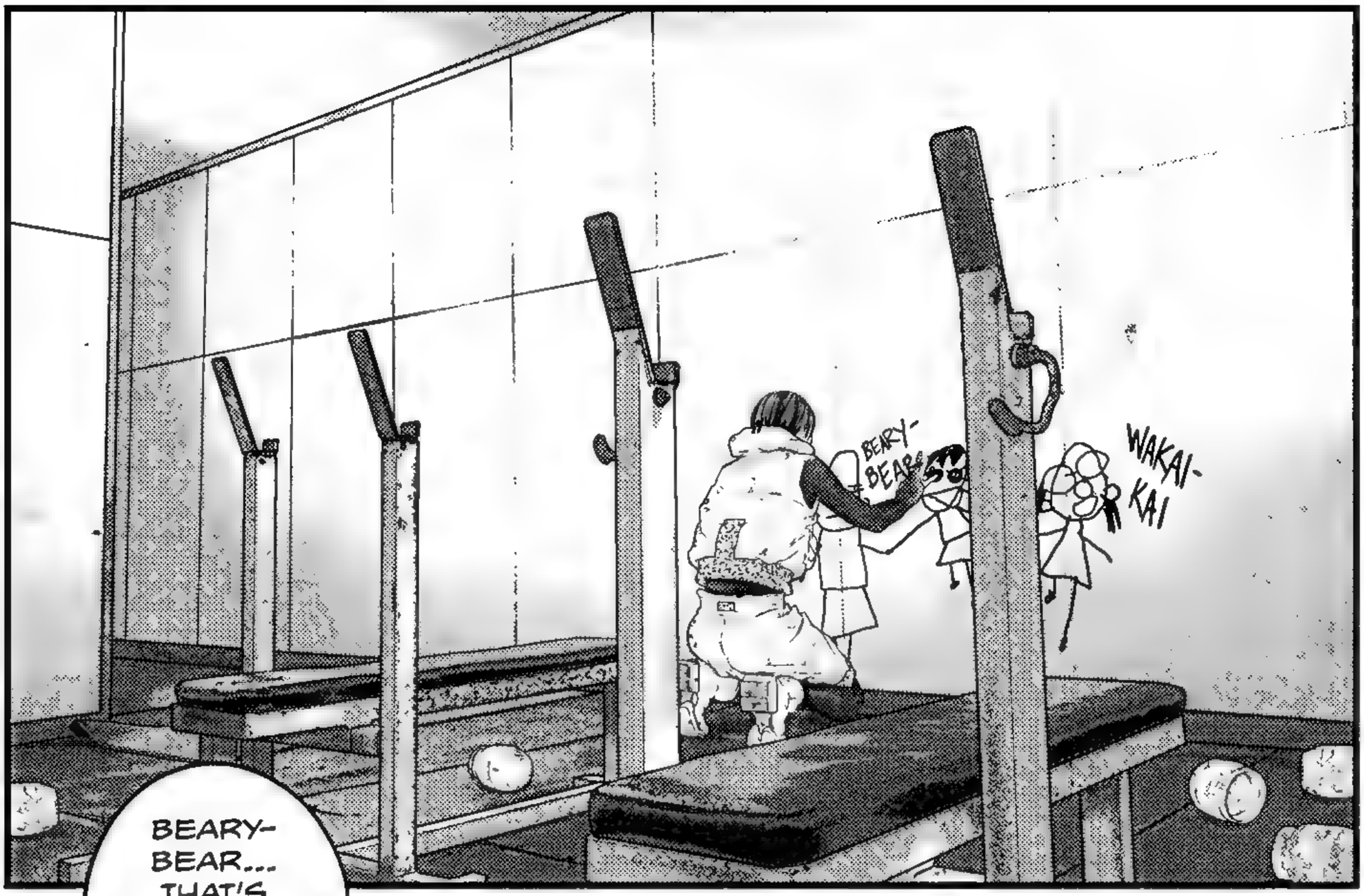
OOF

EH?
...JUST LIKE I ASKED YOU TO.
WHISPER
WHISPER

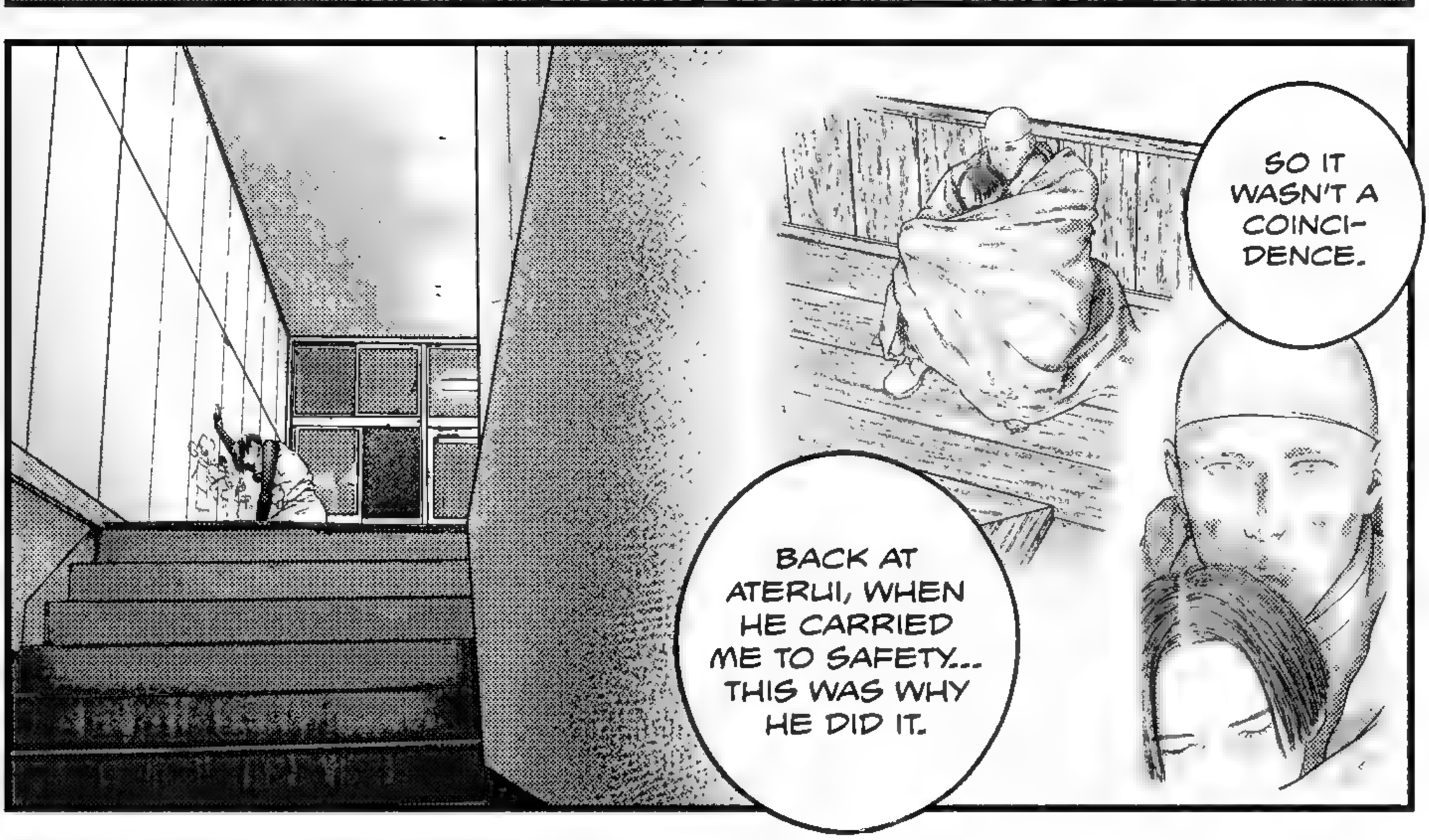
WHISPER
LOOK AT YOU!
KEEPING AN EYE ON TSUNAGI...
WHISPER

KEEP UP THE DAMN FINE WORK!
CREEEAK...

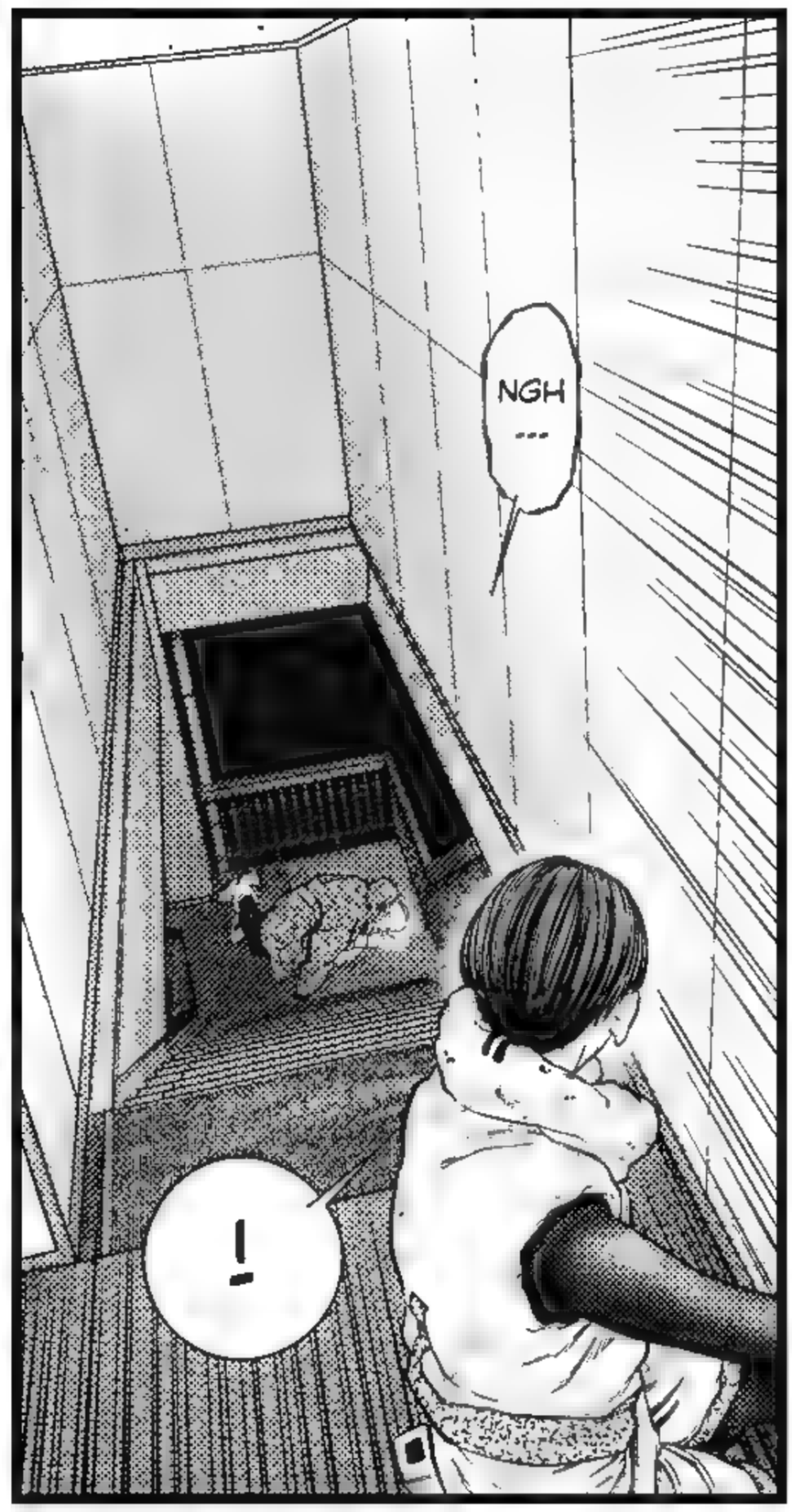

NO ONE.
NO ONE HURTS TSUNAGI.


BEARY-BEAR
WAKAI-KAI
BEARY-BEAR...THAT'S WHAT I CALLED HIM.

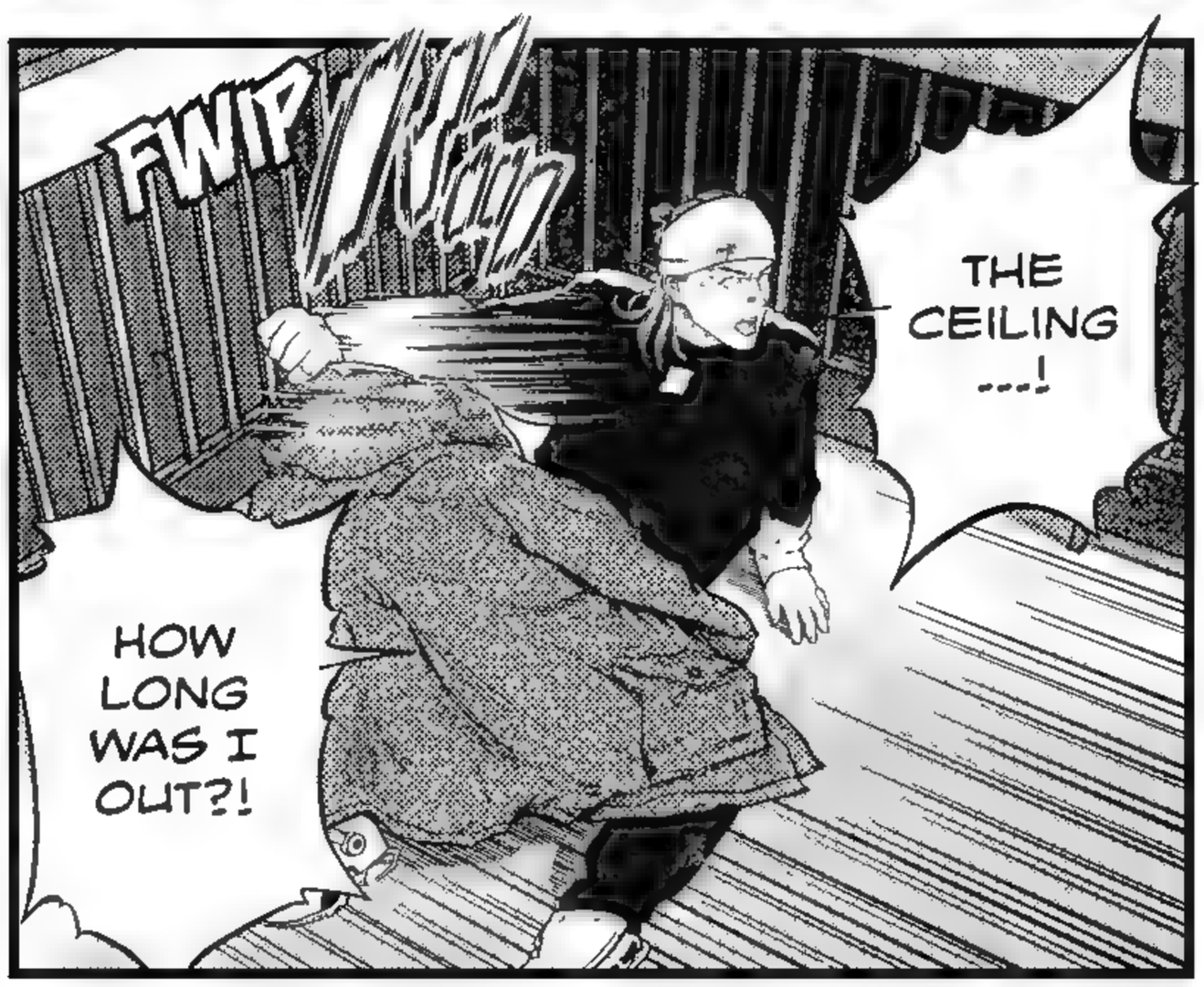
BEARY-BEAR
TSUNAGI
WAKAI-KAI

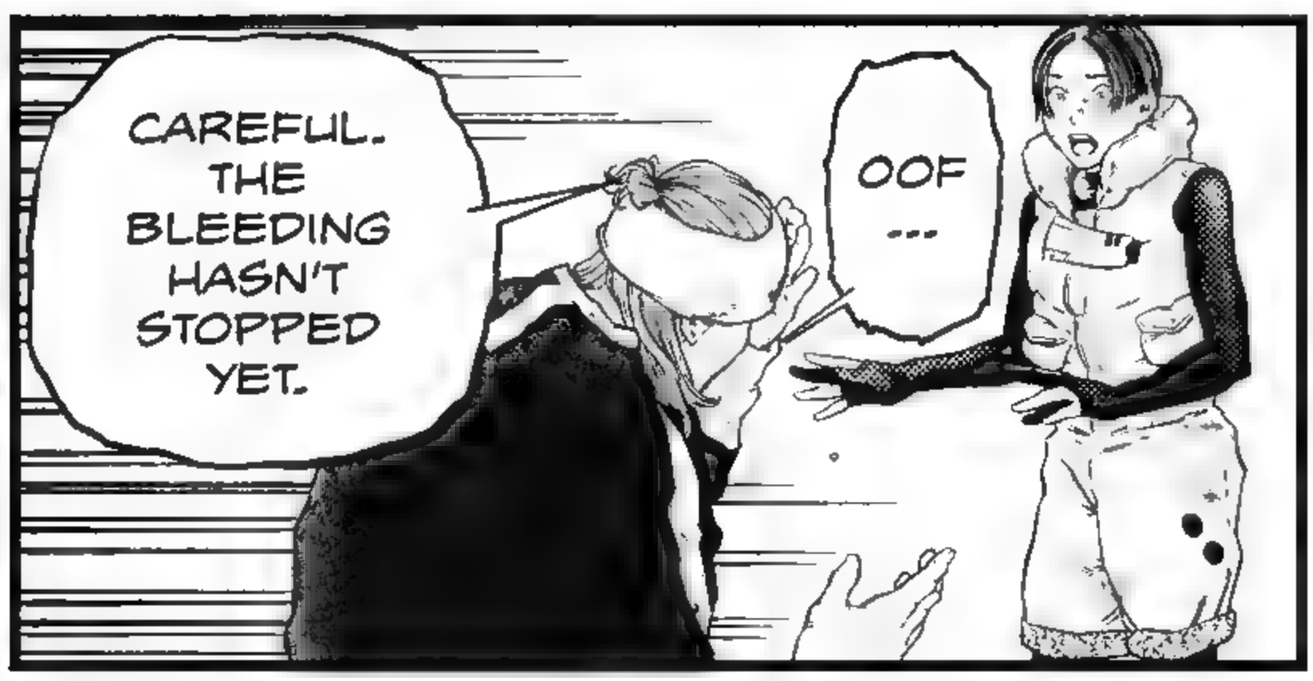

SO IT WASN'T A COINCI-DENCE.
BACK AT ATERUI, WHEN HE CARRIED ME TO SAFETY... THIS WAS WHY HE DID IT.

NN...
TMP TMP
TOGUSA! OH, THANK GOOD-NESS!
ARE YOU AWAKE? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

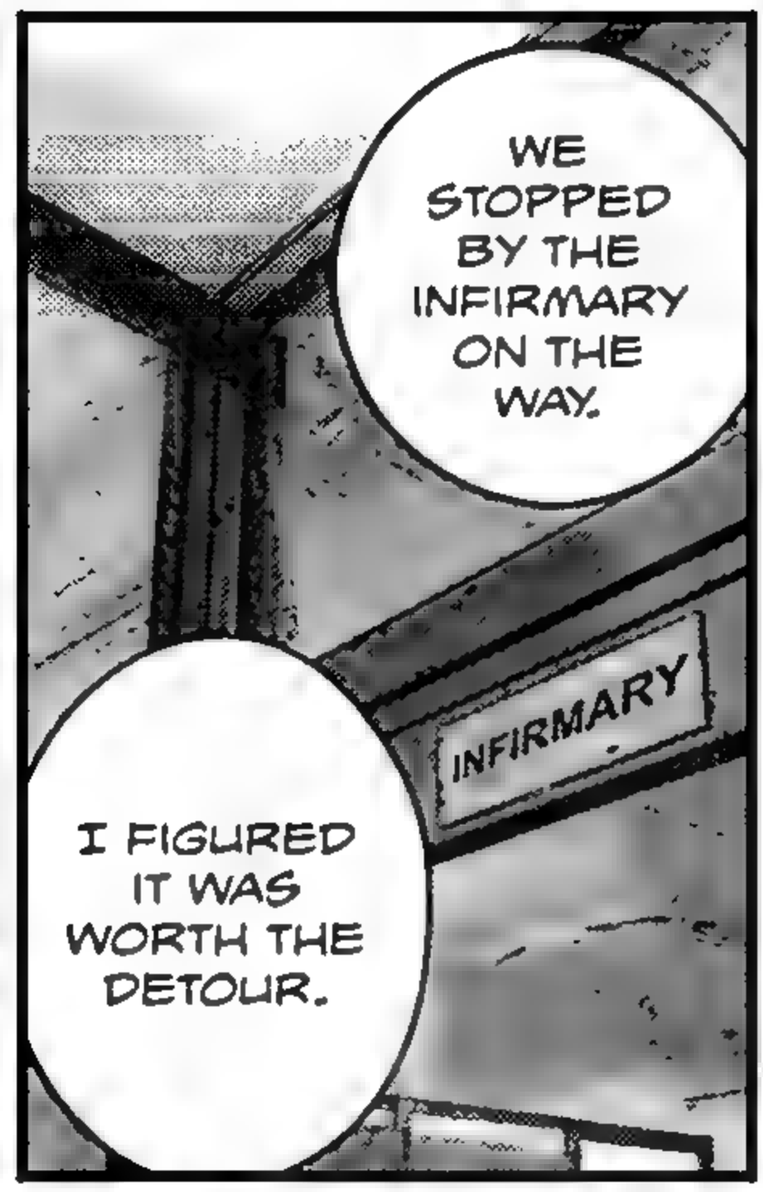

NGH ...
!

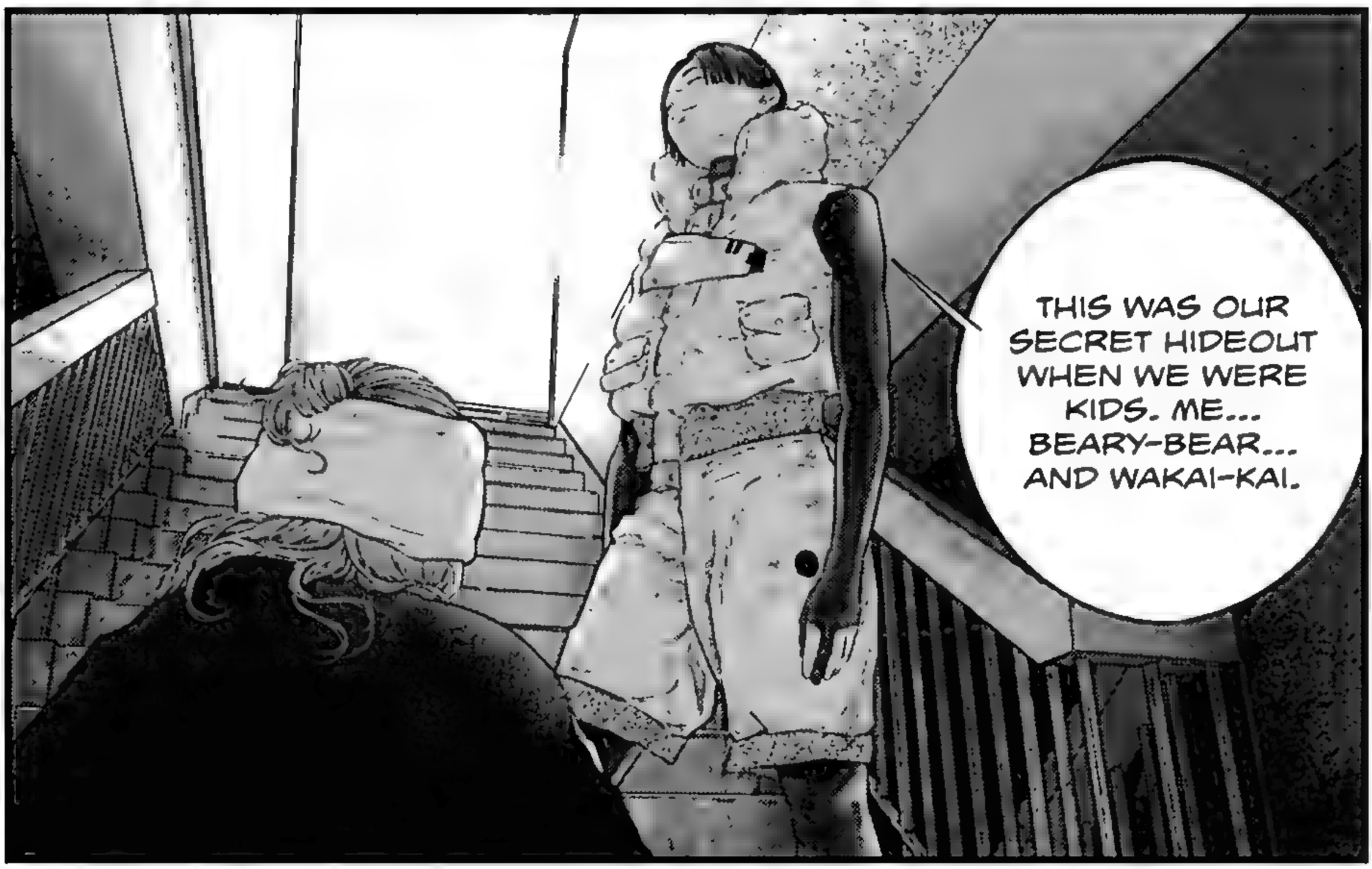
WHERE'D THE BANDAGES COME FROM?


FWIP
THE CEILING ...!
HOW LONG WAS I OUT?!


CAREFUL. THE BLEEDING HASN'T STOPPED YET.
OOF ...

AND THE WATER-LINE?
I TAKE IT WE'RE ON ONE OF THE UPPER FLOORS?


WE STOPPED BY THE INFIRMARY ON THE WAY.
INFIRMARY
I FIGURED IT WAS WORTH THE DETOUR.


THIS WAS OUR SECRET HIDEOUT WHEN WE WERE KIDS. ME... BEARY-BEAR... AND WAKAI-KAI.

...
TSUNAGI, ARE YOU...?

YEAH. I'M FINE.

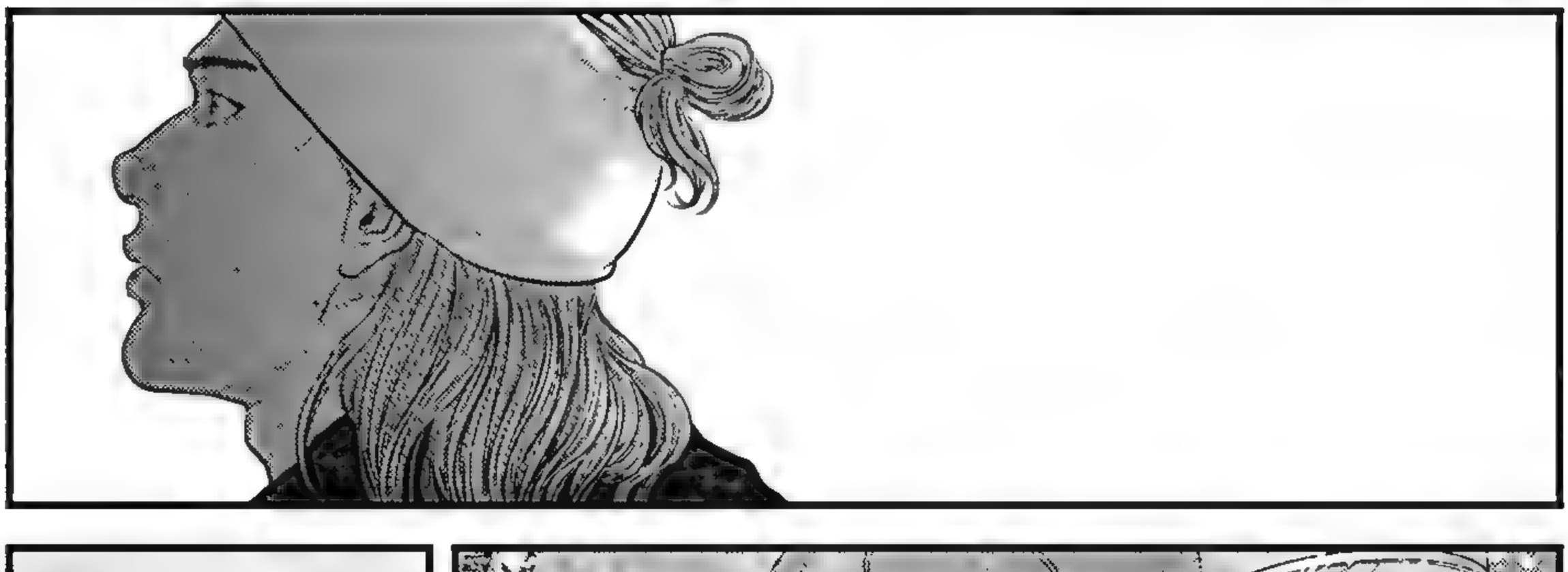
AND I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS. I REMEMBERED A WAY OUT.

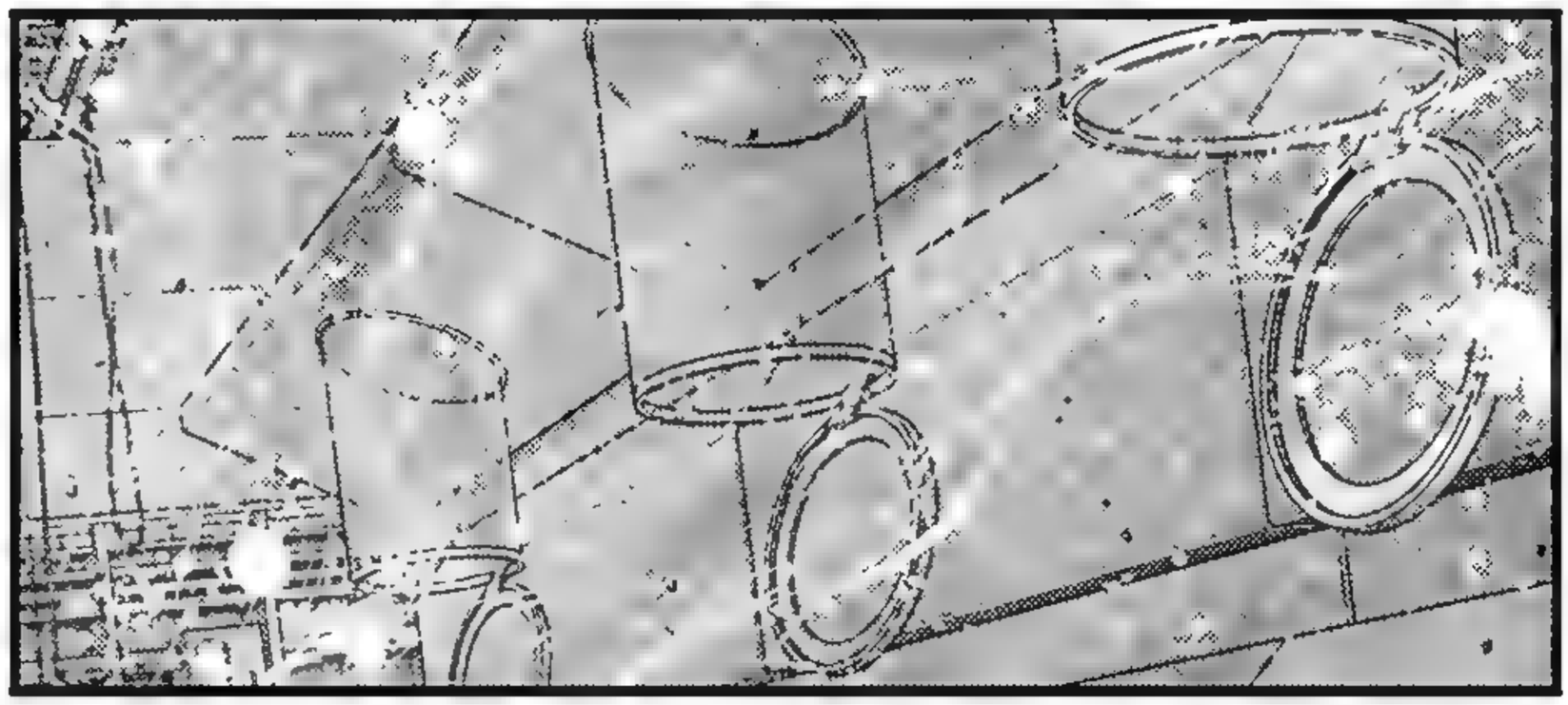
HONEST.

I WON'T BREAK DOWN ON YOU AGAIN.

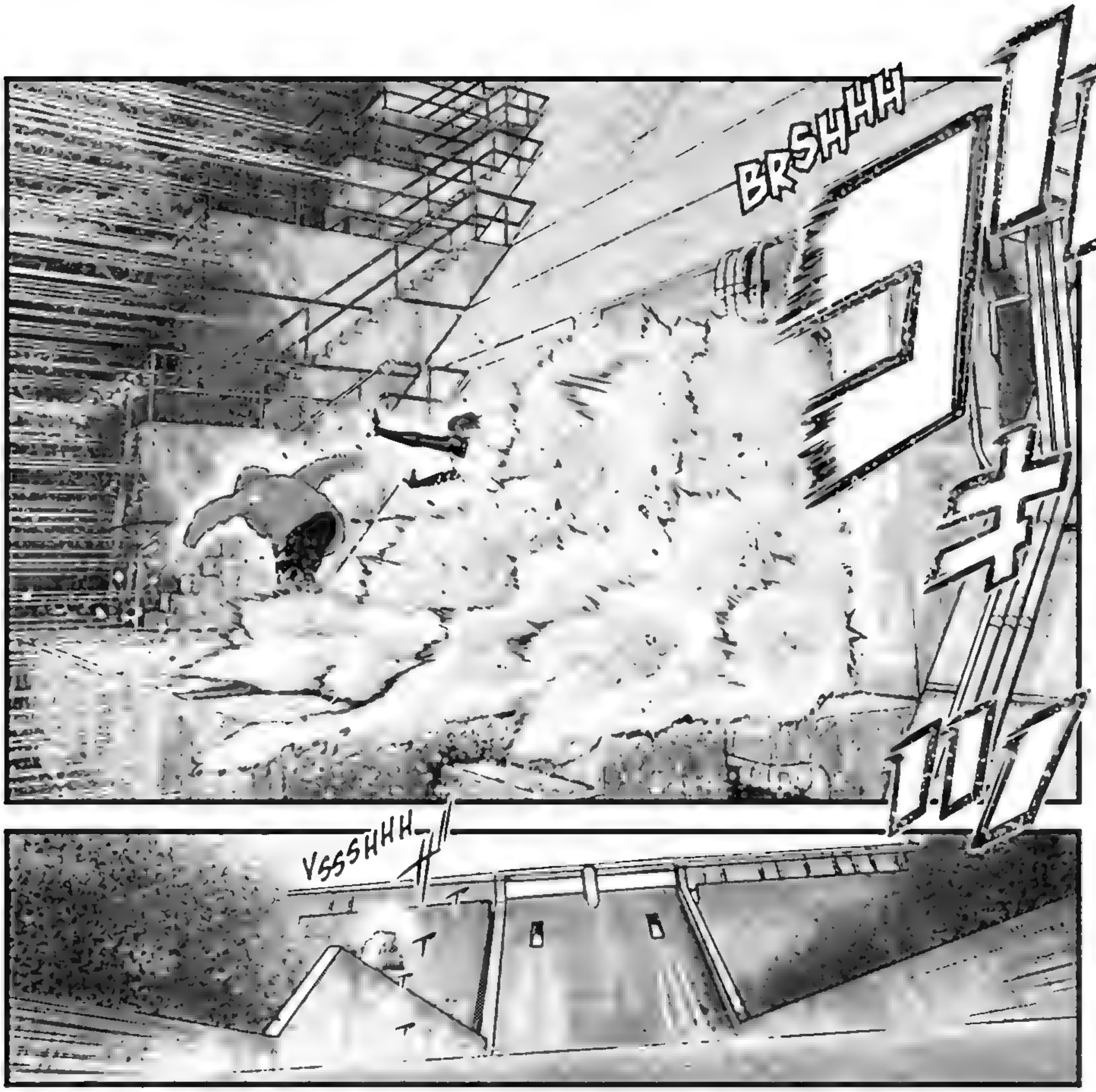
FOLLOW ME.

I'M GONNA GET US OUTTA HERE.





HFF!
HFF!
C... COME ON!
PICK UP THE PACE!
BEARY-BEAR
TSUNAG
BEARY-BEAR
TSUNAG!
KAI
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!
IT'S ALMOST ON TOP OF US!
THE WATER!
ROOOAAR
HURRY !!
SPLISH
MM
BL
RM
EEEK!

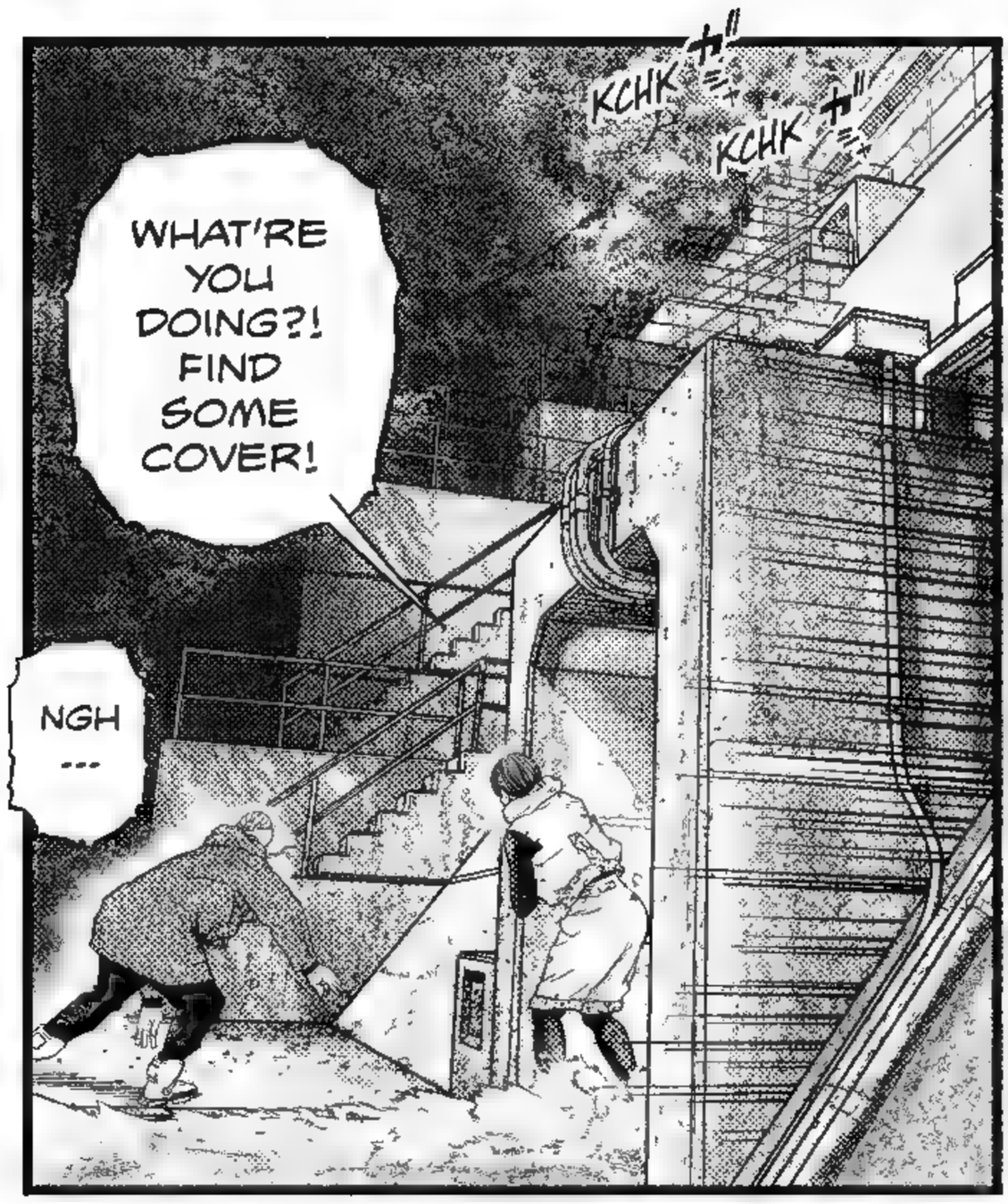

BRSHHH
VSSSHHH

YEAH, WELL LET'S SAVE THE CELEBRATION.
WE'VE STILL GOTTA FIND A WAY OFF OF THIS DAM.
VSSSHHH
HFF...

HFF...
HFF...
HFF...
HFF...
HFF...
DOESN'T GET MUCH CLOSER THAN THAT...
I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY TO SEE THE SKY!

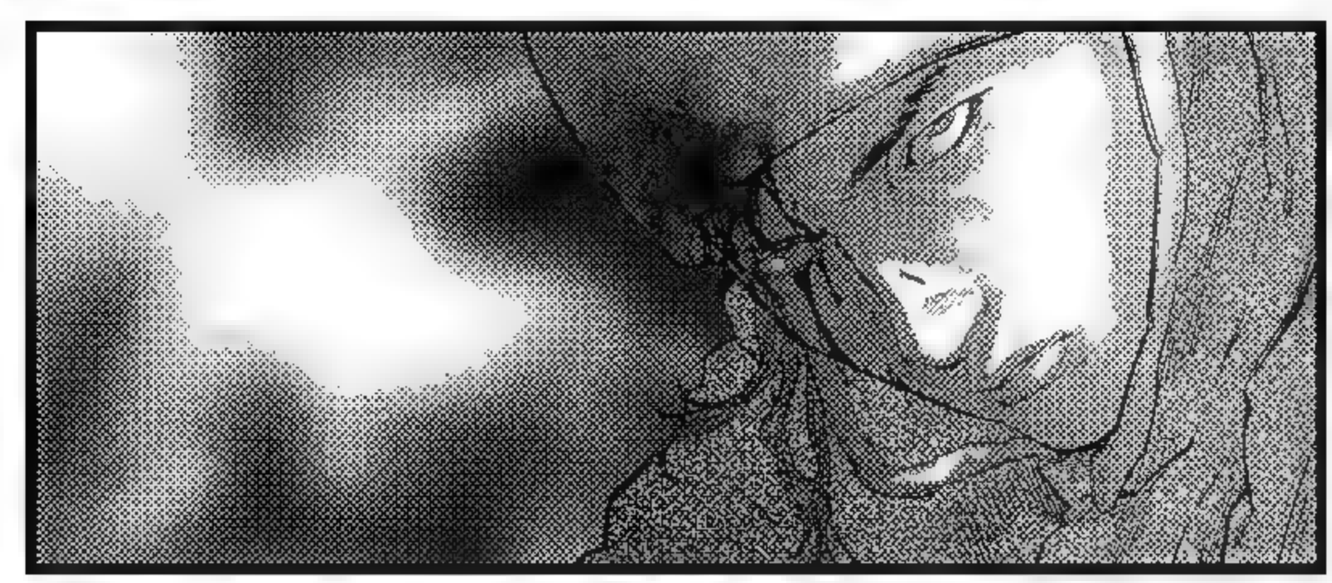
HFF...
GLINT
WE'RE GONNA BE FINE. LOOK. THAT STAIRWAY LEADS STRAIGHT TO THE CREST.
HFF...
I USED TO SNEAK OUT THIS WAY. SIDEBURNS WOULD ALWAYS GET SO MAD AT ME.

THAK
?!
THAK
THAK
GET DOWN!!
THAK
THAK

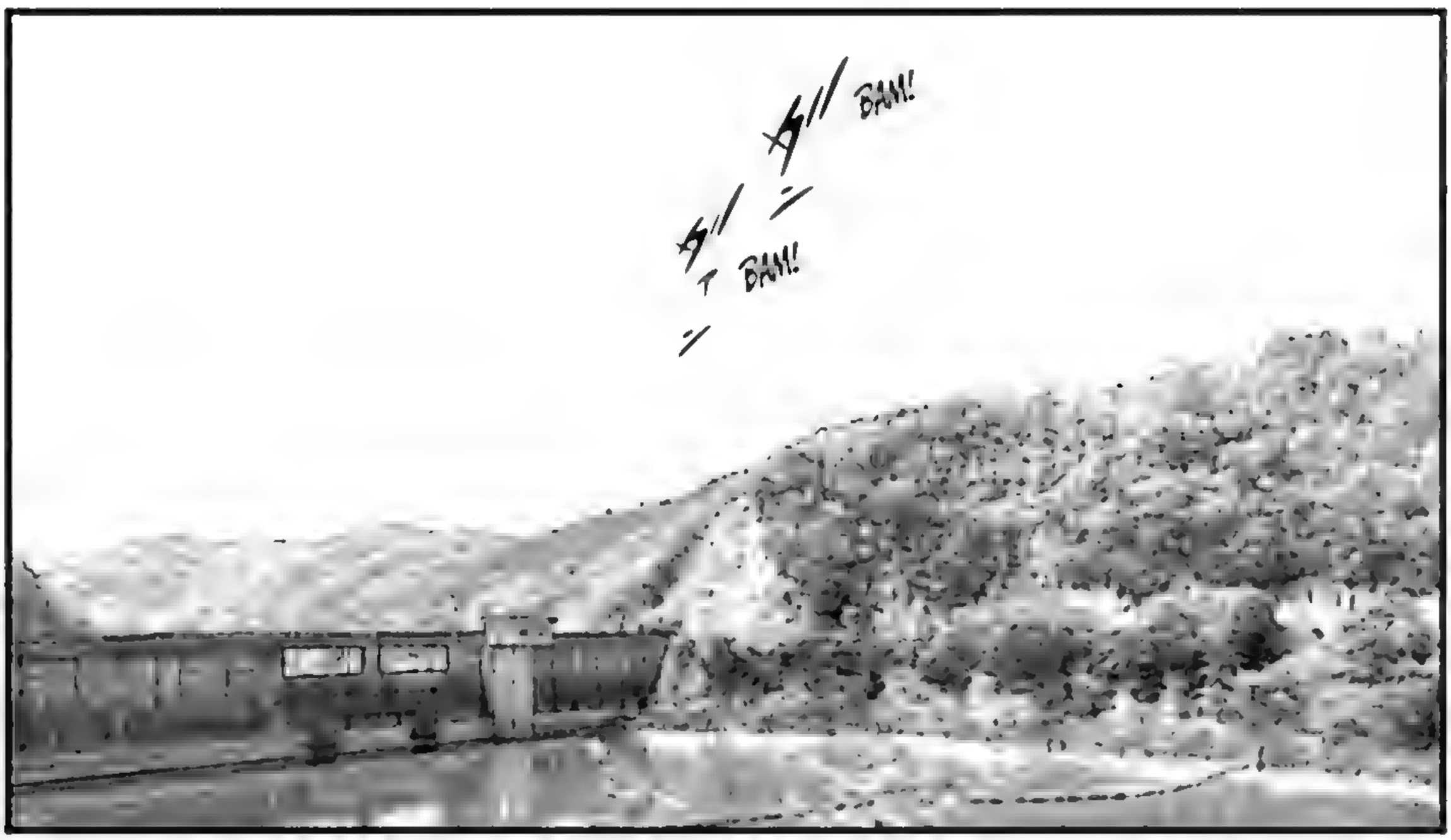

KCHK
KCHK
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?! FIND SOME COVER!
NGH ...

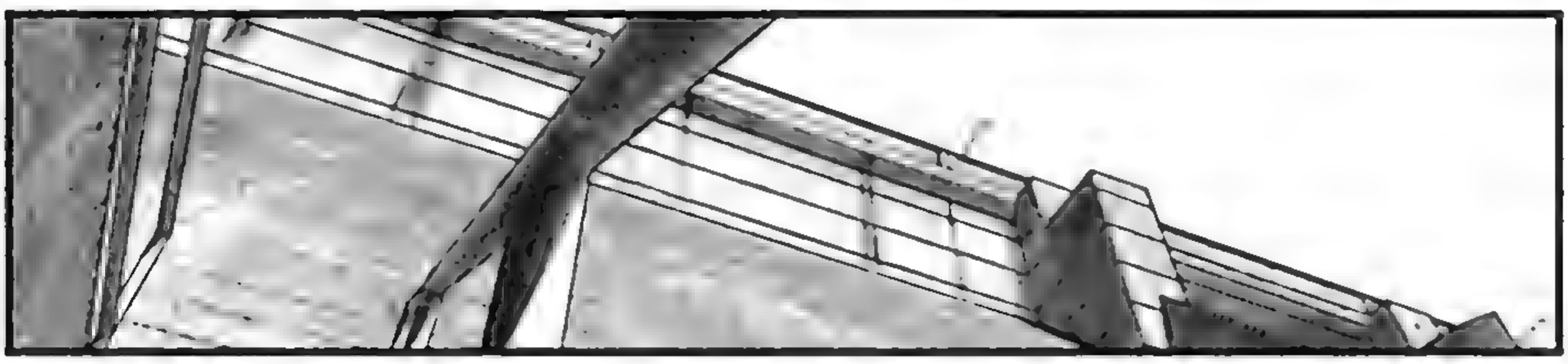
DAMN.
LOOKS LIKE OUR ENGINEER FRIEND IS BACK.

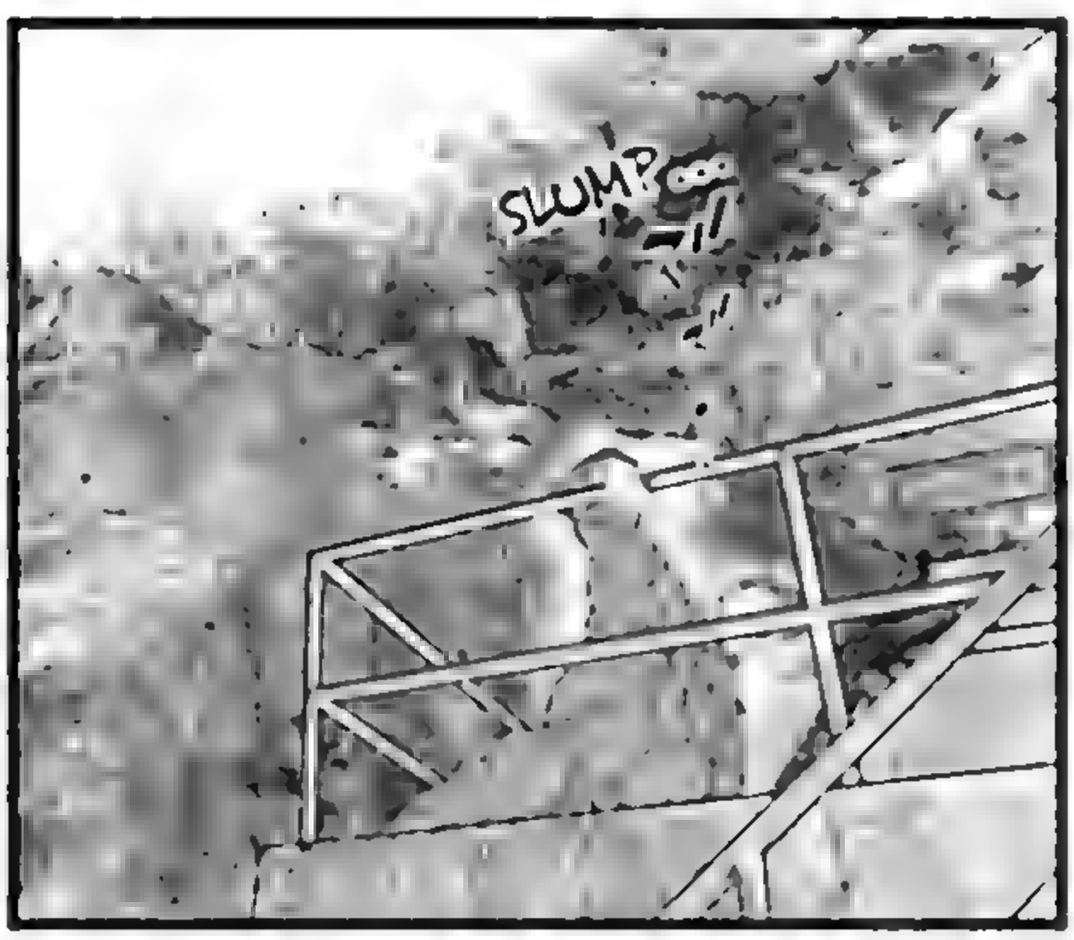
WOBBLE...
?!



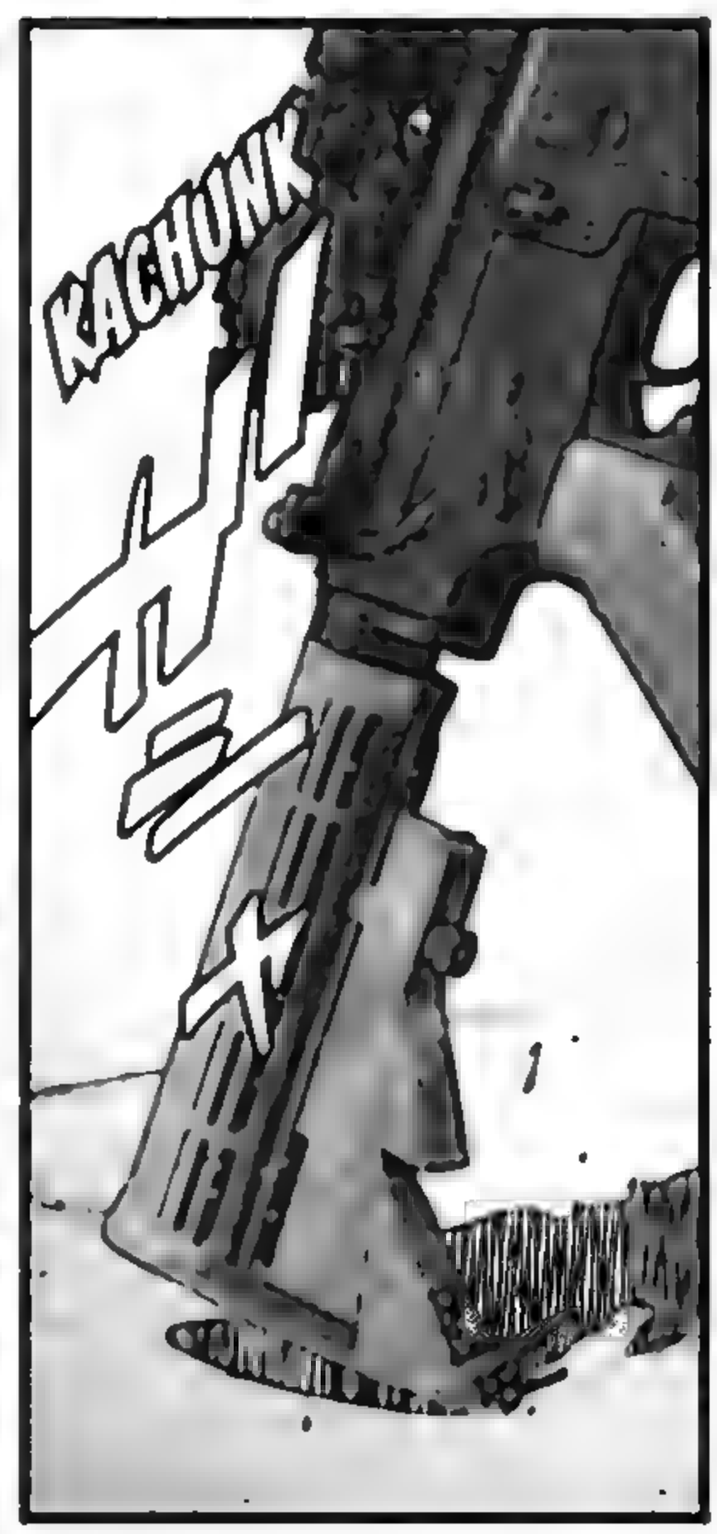
TOGUSA ?!
WHUD


BAM!
BAM!




SLUMP

THUNK


KACHUNK

WHUMP
I TOLD YOU. I'VE GOT GREAT MARKSMANSHIP SCORES.
"GREAT" DOESN'T EVEN BEGIN TO COVER IT...
DID YOU JUST MAKE THAT SHOT WITH A *PISTOL*?

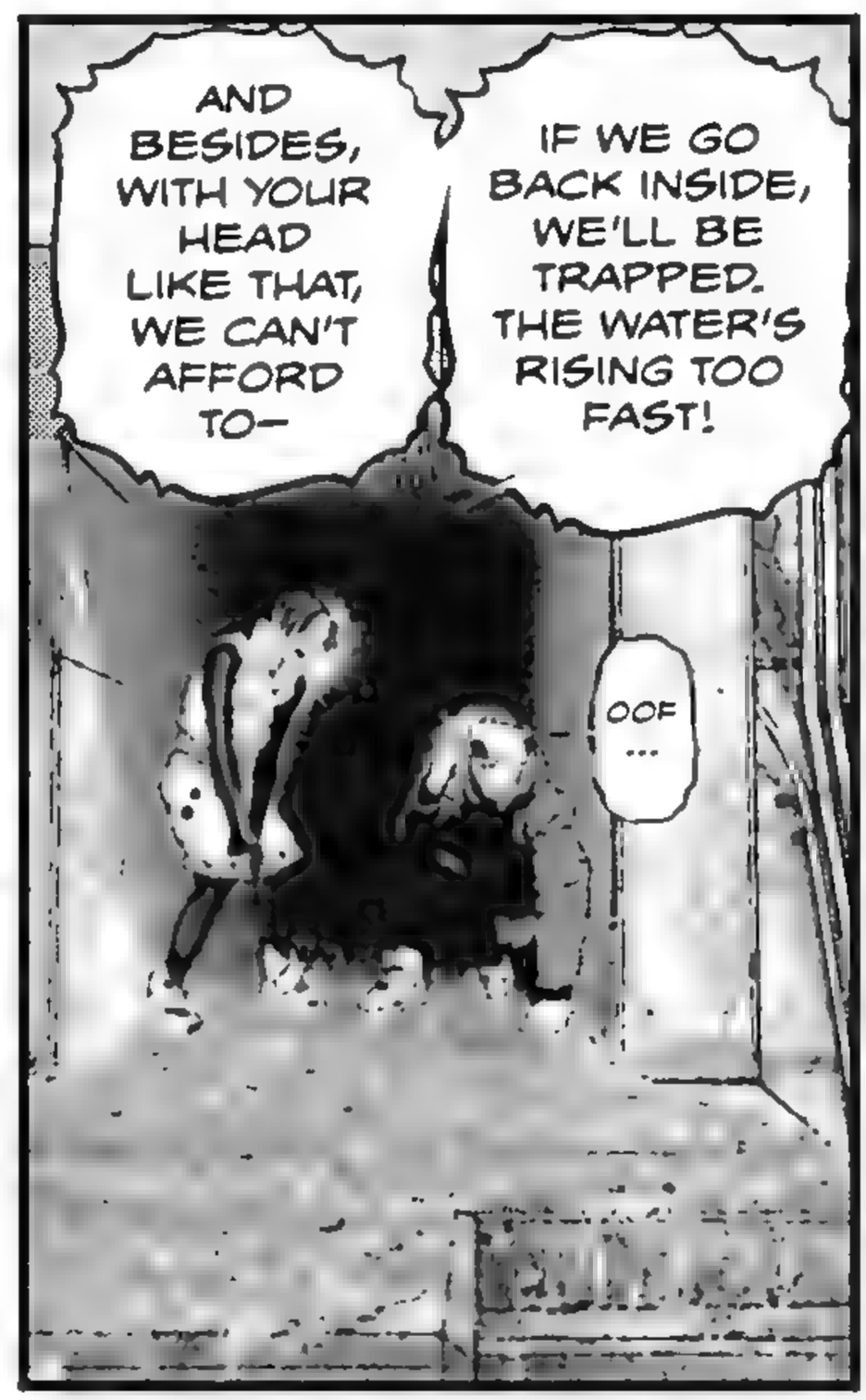
HOW IN THE HELL...?!

TSUNAGI! STOP! LET'S FALL BACK TO THE LAB!
I CAN DO IT! JUST GIMME A—

OVER HERE!
FOUND 'EM!
?!

DAMMIT ...!
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE
QUICK! THE STAIRS!
NO! THERE'S TOO MANY OF THEM!

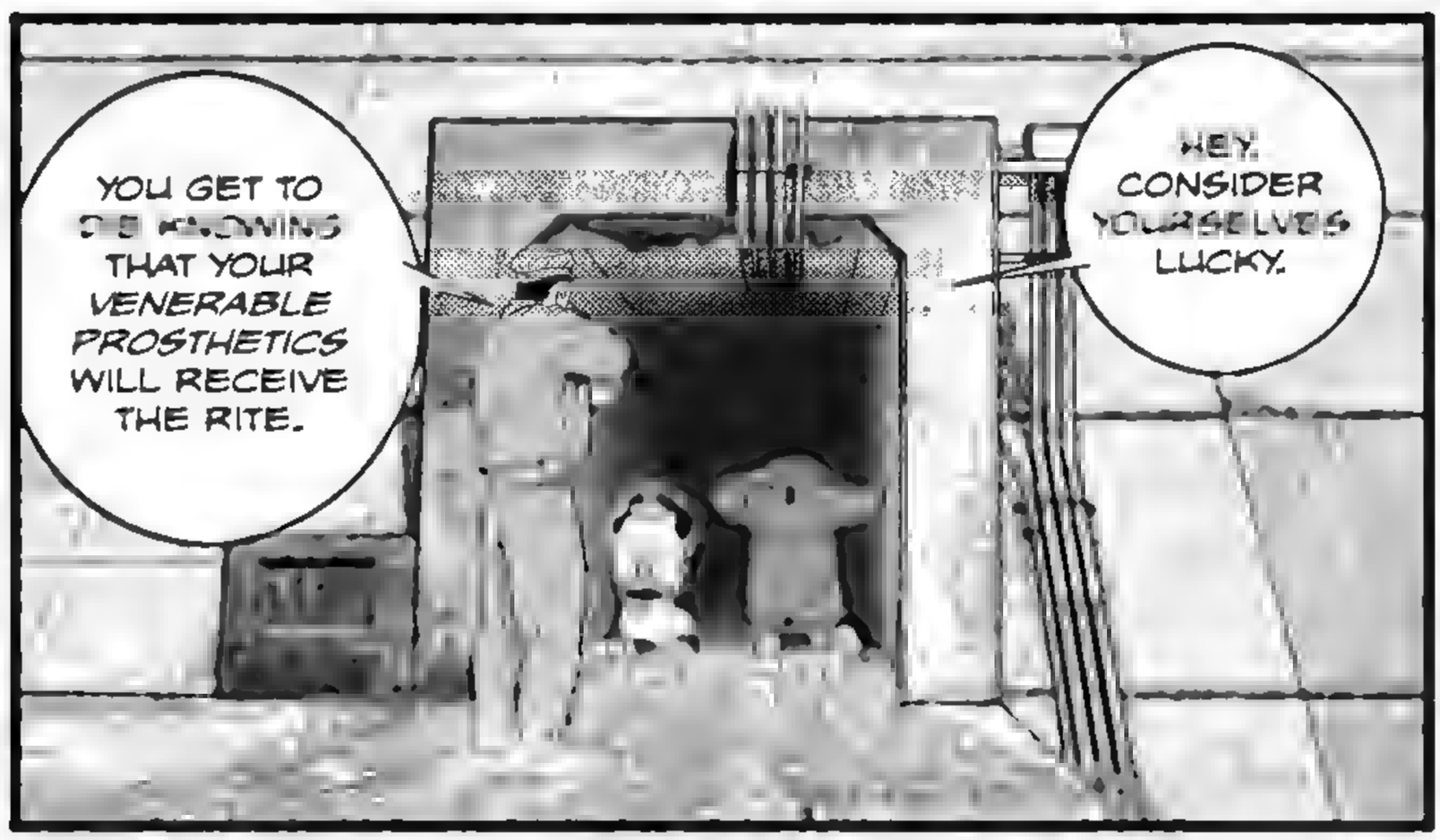
DASH
SPLISH
WAIT! THAT'S RIGHT! IF WE HEAD DOWN THESE STEPS...

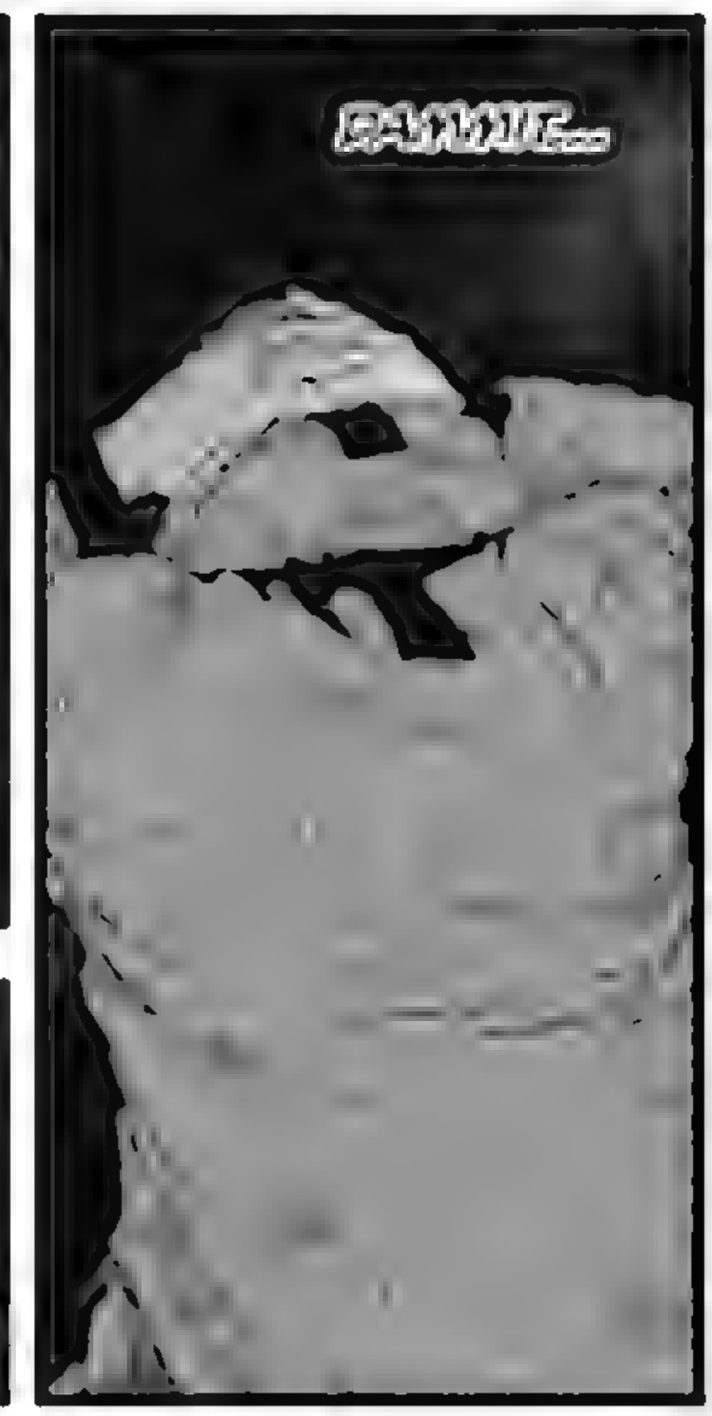

AND BESIDES, WITH YOUR HEAD LIKE THAT, WE CAN'T AFFORD TO—
IF WE GO BACK INSIDE, WE'LL BE TRAPPED. THE WATER'S RISING TOO FAST!
OOF ...

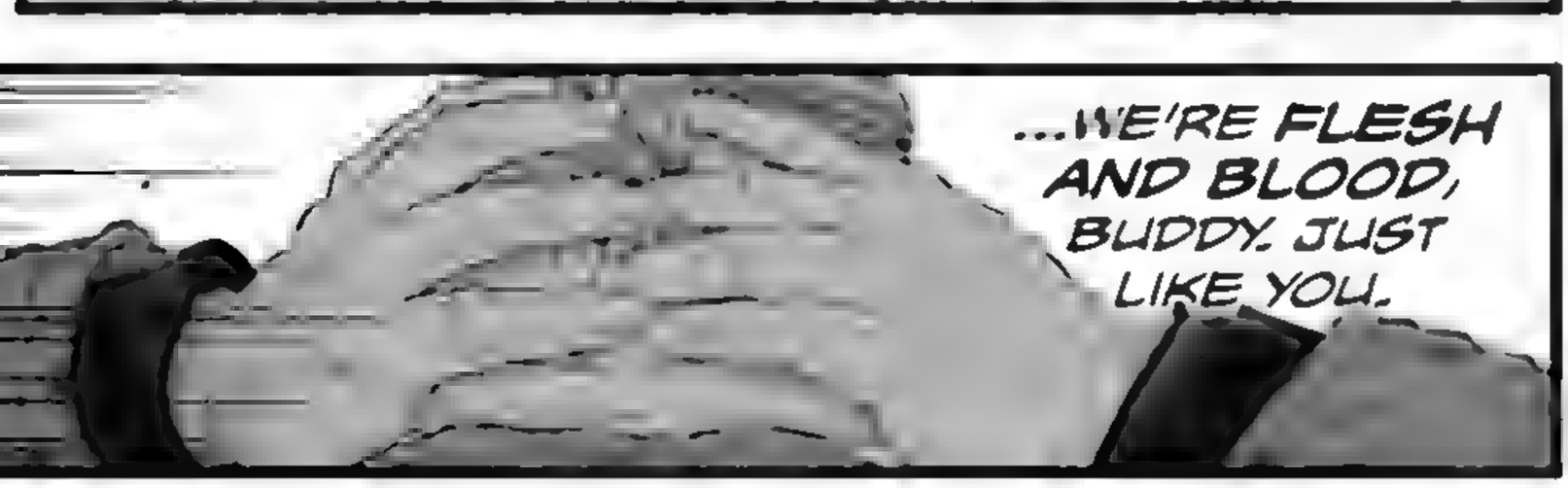
DROP YOUR WEAPONS.
YOU, TOO, GIRLIE.
WH—?!

GOOD. NOW BACK AWAY SLOWLY.

AND TURN AROUND. NICE AND EASY.
HANDS ON YOUR HEADS.


YOU GET TO DIE KNOWING THAT YOUR VENERABLE PROSTHETICS WILL RECEIVE THE RITE.
HEY. CONSIDER YOURSELVES LUCKY.


RAMMIT...


...WE'RE FLESH AND BLOOD, BUDDY. JUST LIKE YOU.

KASPLTCH

THWP
THWP
THWP
THWP
?!
THWP
THWP
THWP
ALL CLEAR.
COME ON OUT, TOGUSA.
THWP
THWP
THWP
S...

GLAD YOU TWO LOVEBIRDS ARE ALL RIGHT.

KLICK

SAITO?!

PRETTY SWEET RESCUE OPERATION, HUH? IT WAS MY IDEA!

W...

THWP
THWP
THWP
THWP
THWP
THWP

I PUT THE WHOLE THING TOGETHER! YOU BOTH OWE ME BIG TIME!

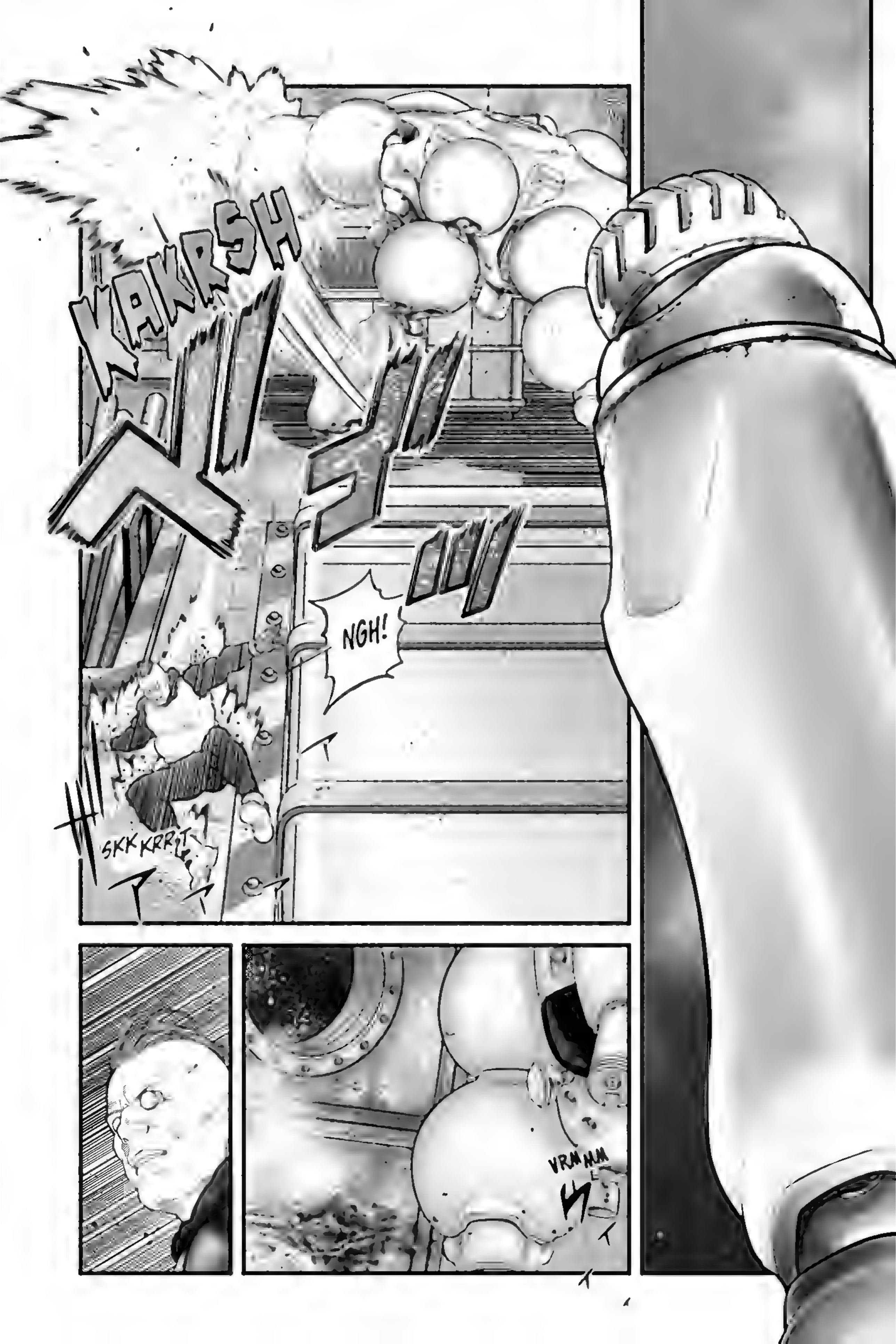
HIT THE STAIRS.

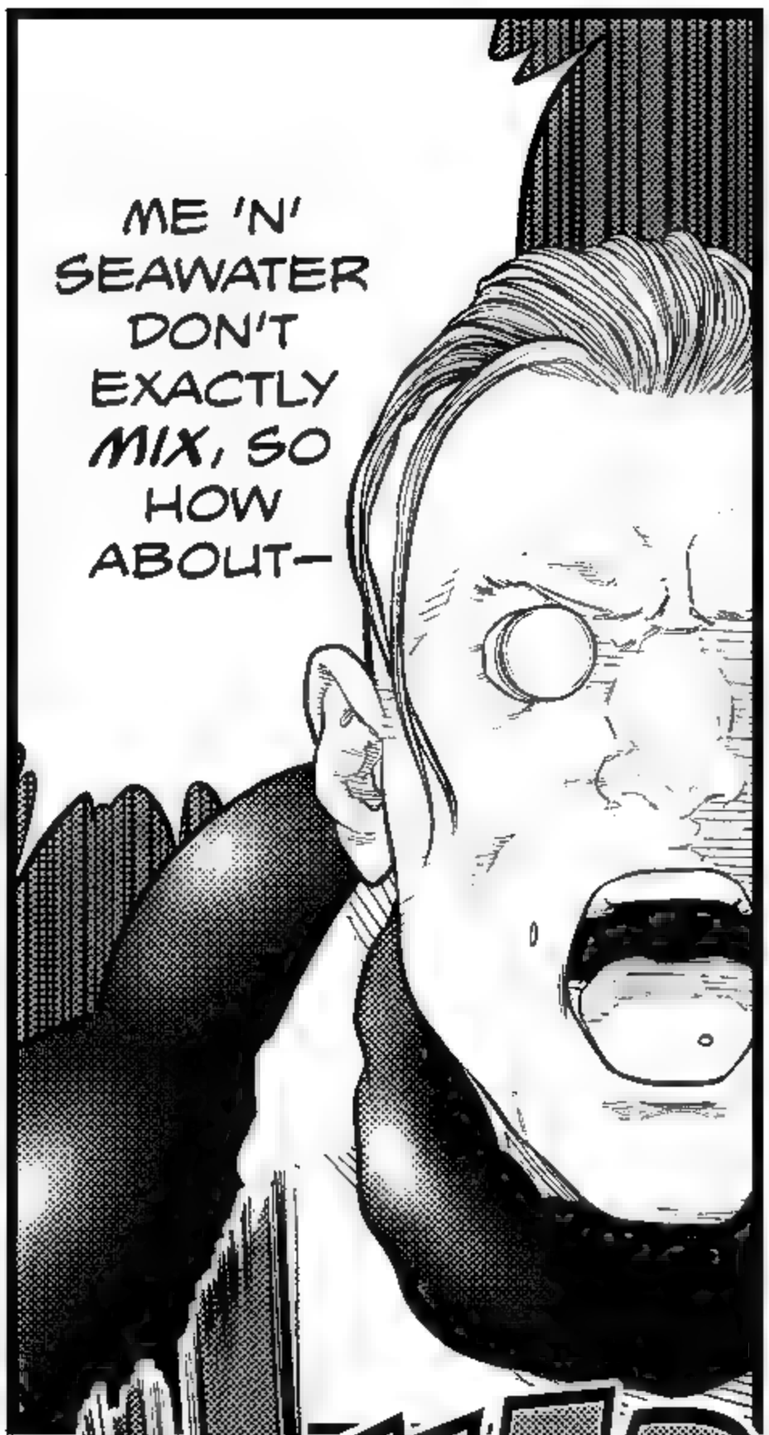
WE'RE SAVED!

FLUMP...

WE'LL PICK YOU UP AT THE TOP.

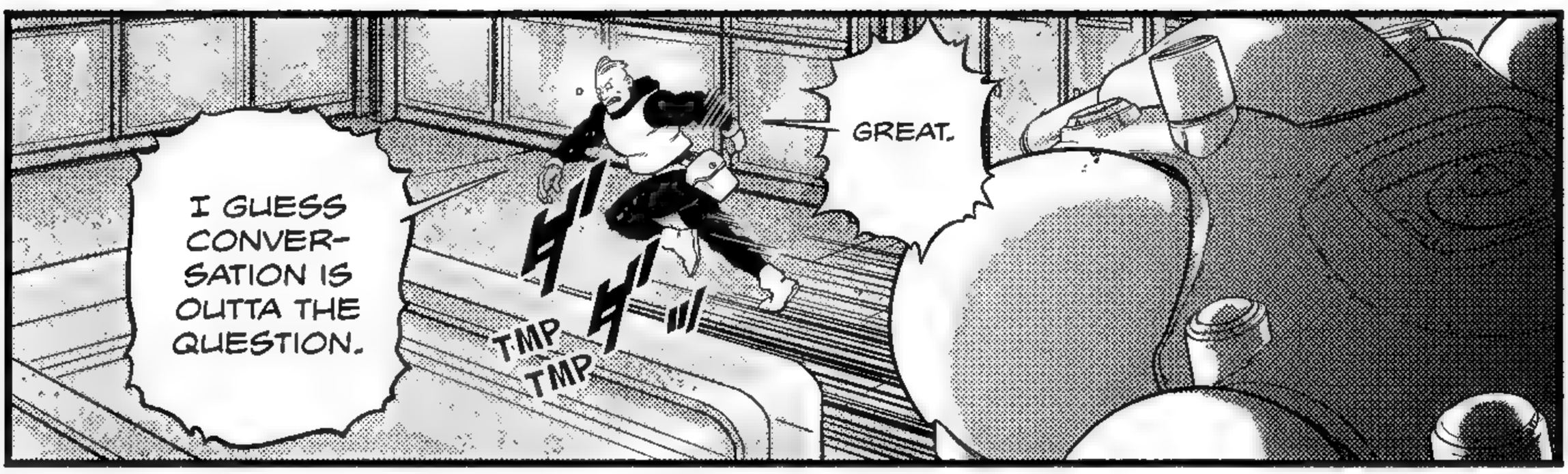
16
BOOBY TRAP

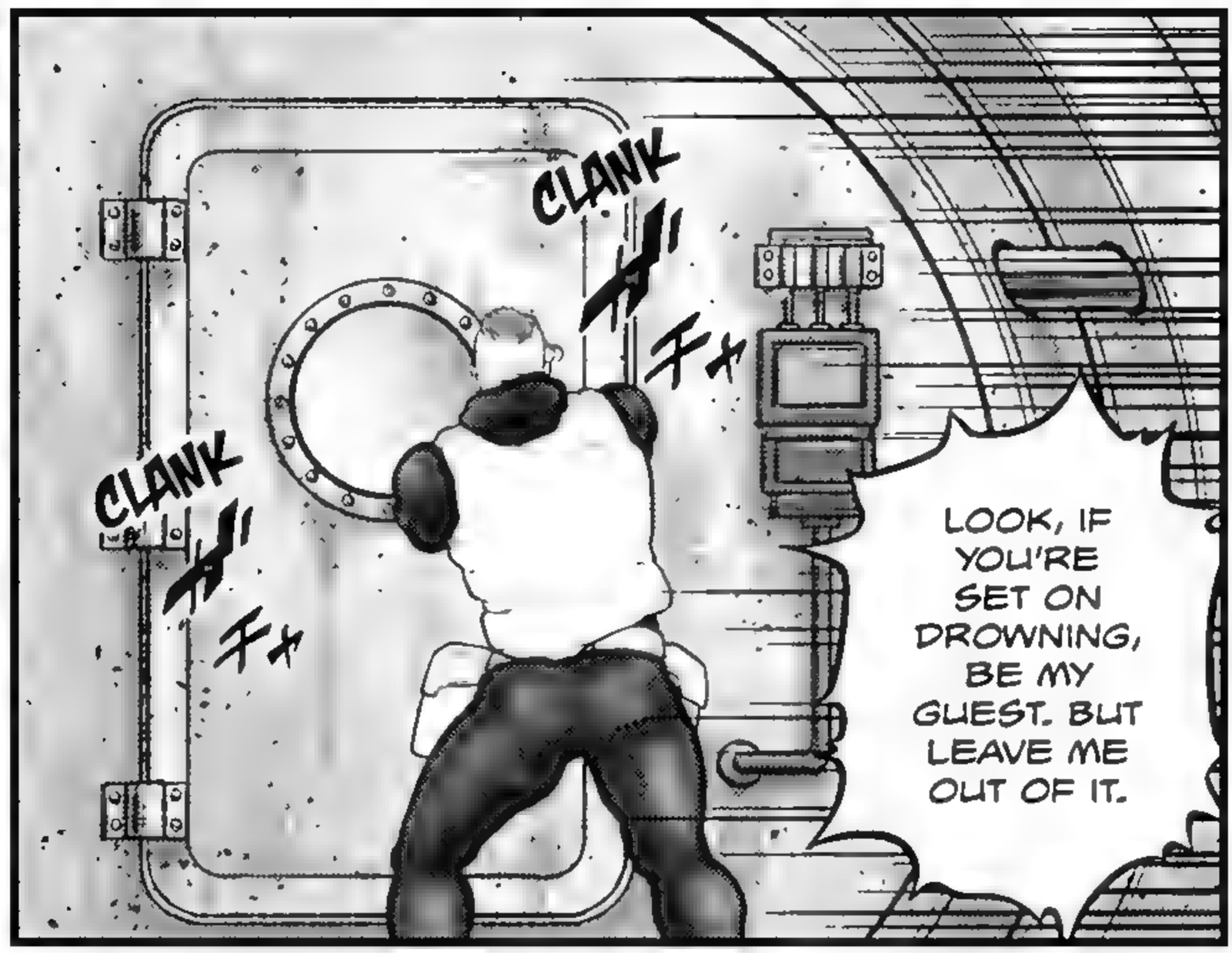

KRAKRSH
NGH!
SKKKRRT
VRMMM


ME 'N' SEAWATER DON'T EXACTLY MIX, SO HOW ABOUT—

HEY, TWINKLE-TOES!
DID YOU FORGET WHERE WE ARE?!

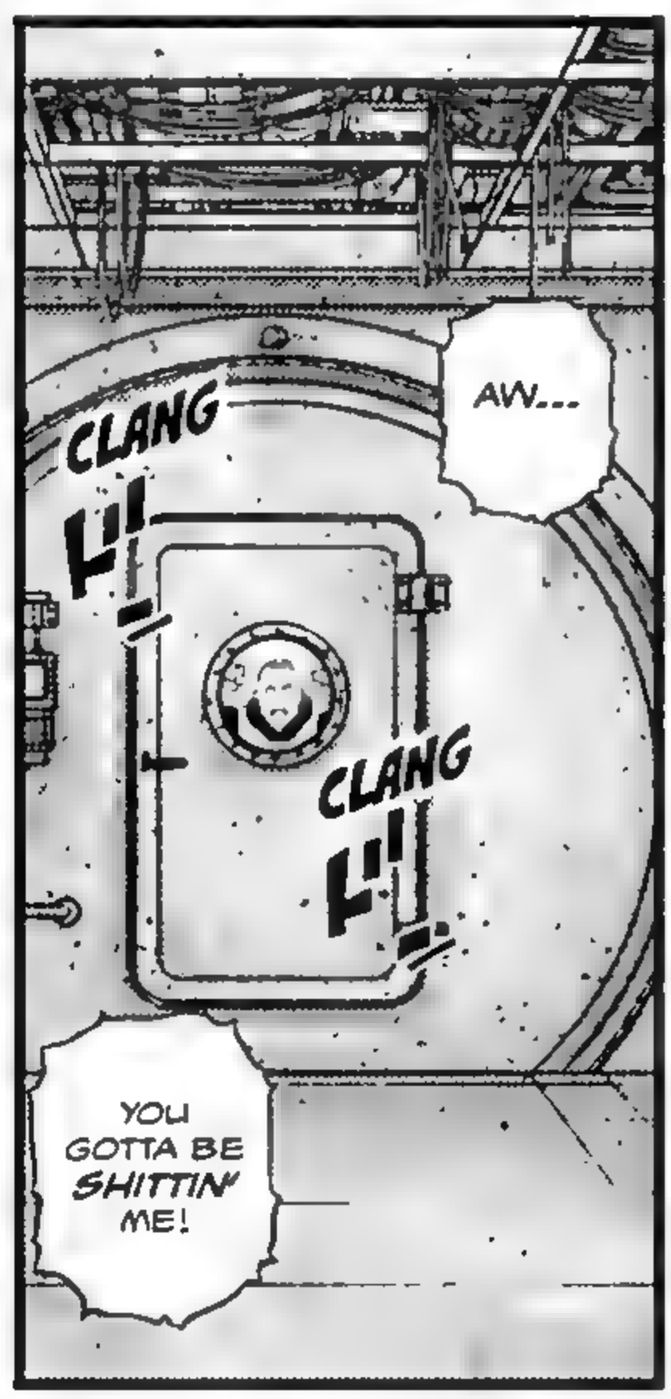
KERSLAM!
HEY! I'M TALKIN' HERE!

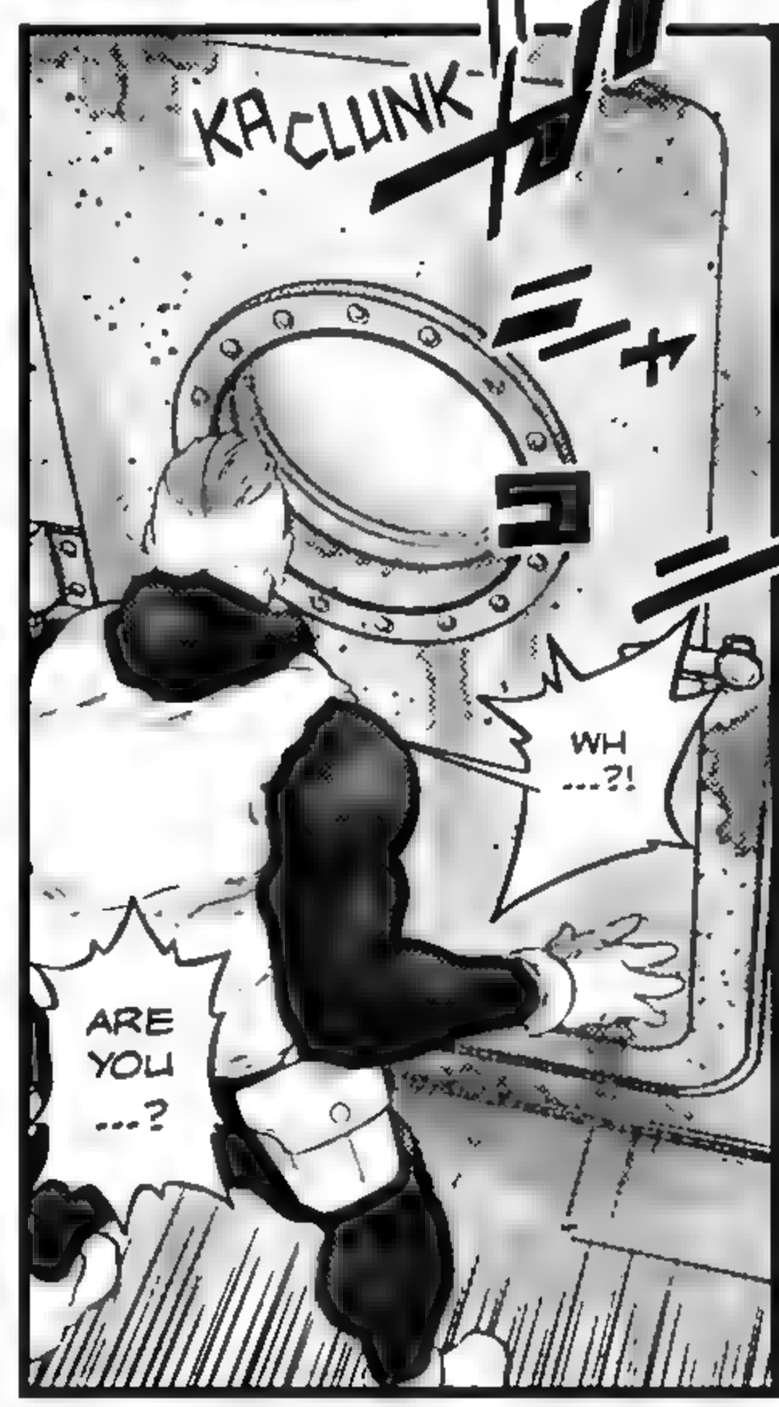

GREAT.
I GUESS CONVER-SATION IS OUTTA THE QUESTION.
TMP
TMP

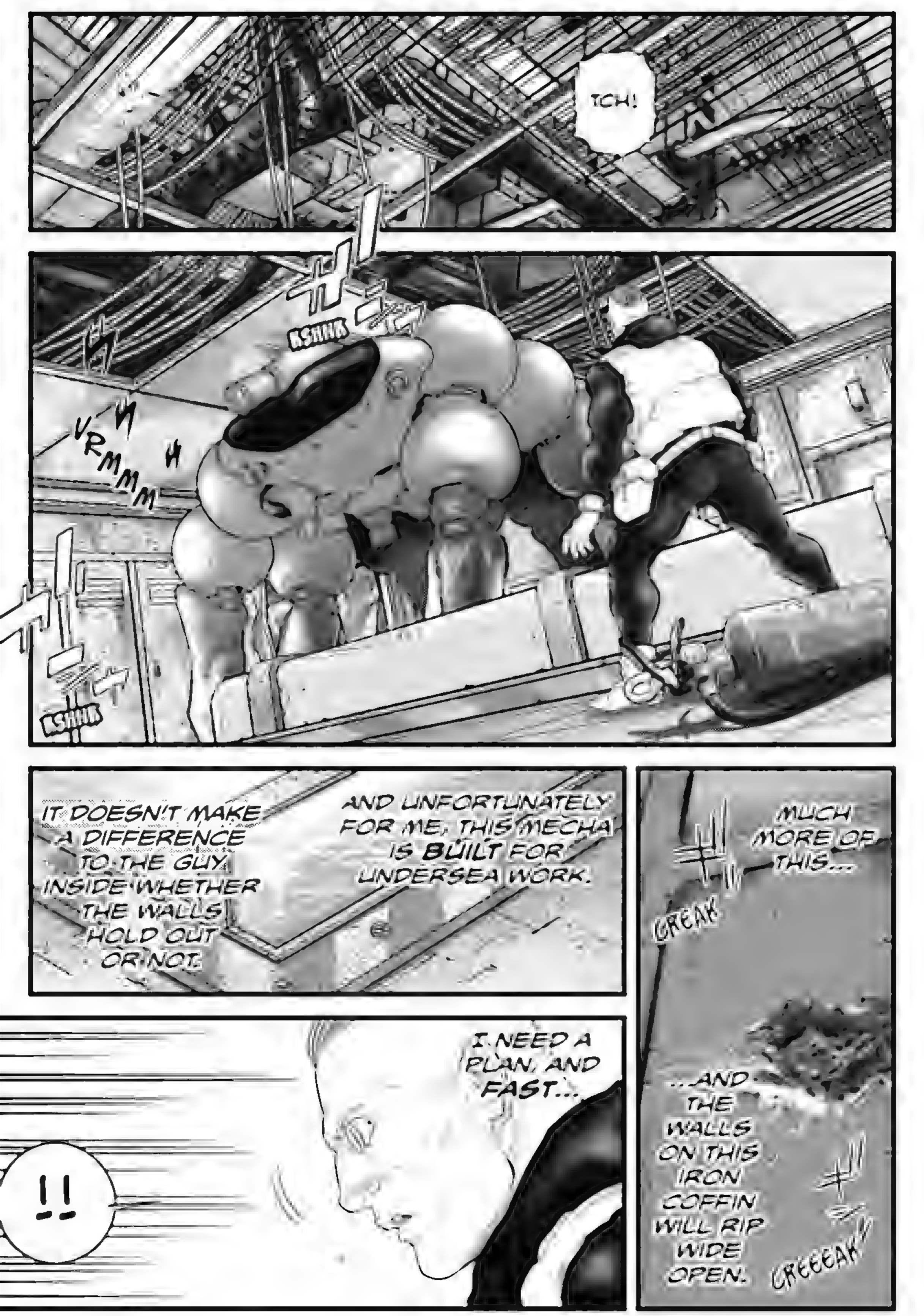

CLANK
CLANK
LOOK, IF YOU'RE SET ON DROWNING, BE MY GUEST. BUT LEAVE ME OUT OF IT.

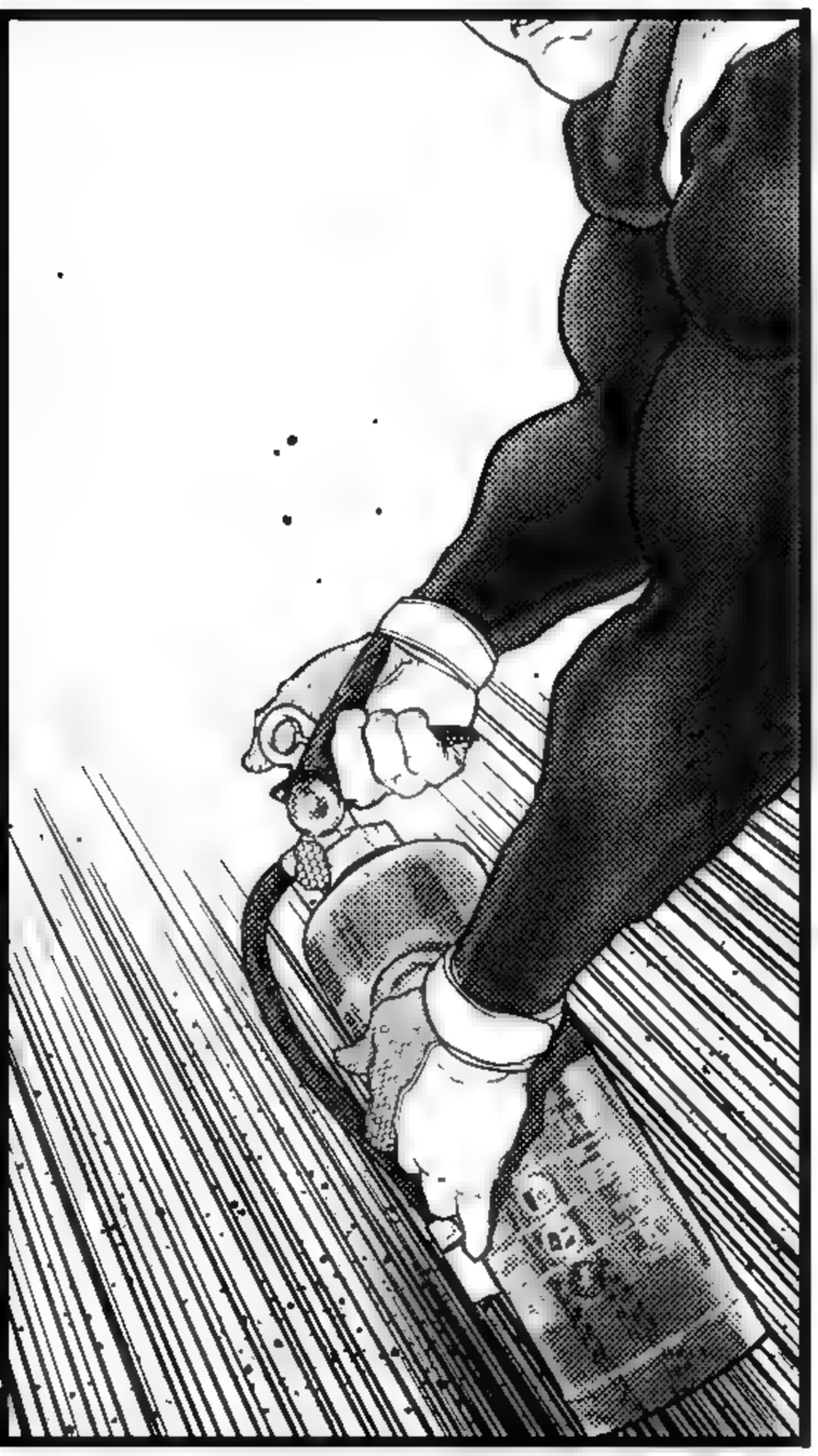
SO IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SEND ME PACKIN', HUH? YOU'RE OUT FOR BLOOD.

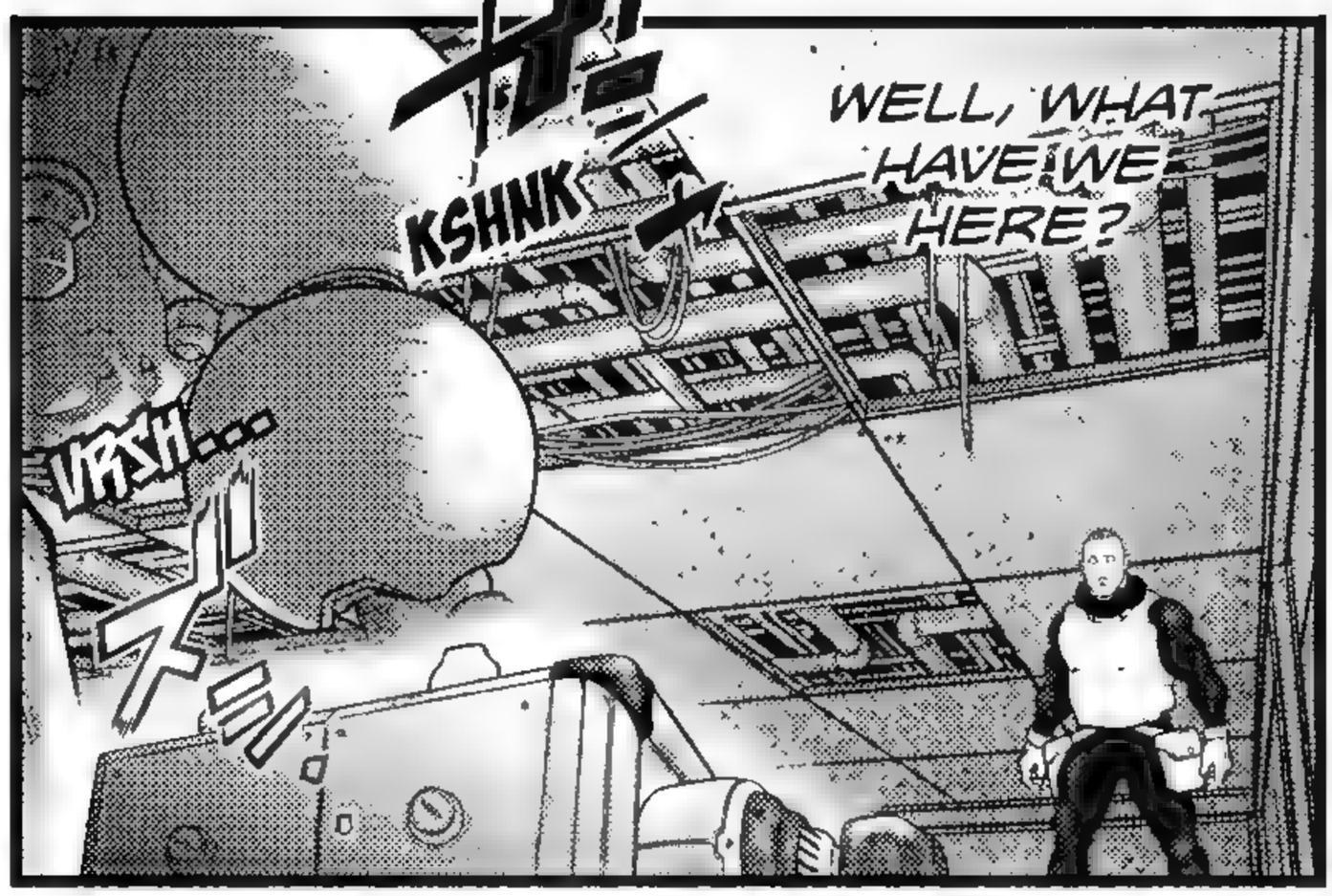
?!
BEEEEEP


AW...
CLANG
CLANG
YOU GOTTA BE SHITTIN' ME!

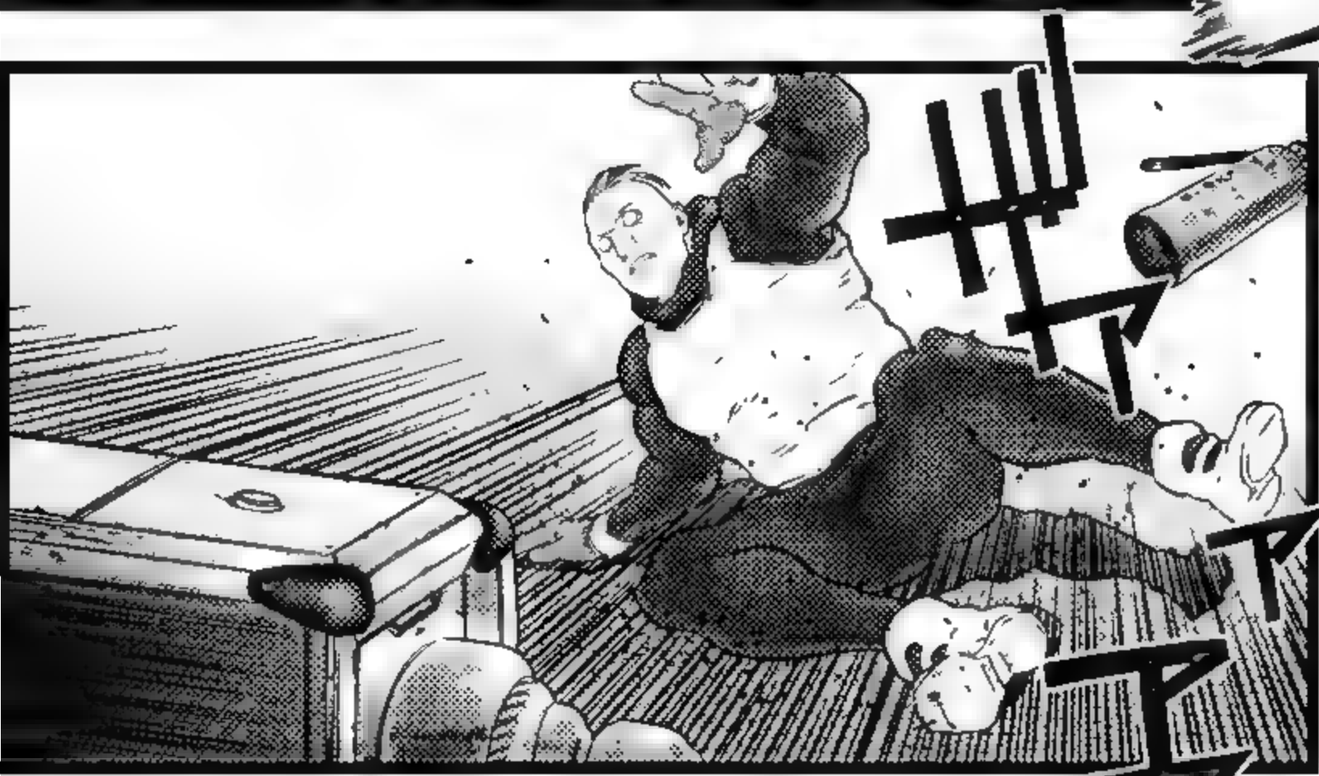

KA CLUNK
WH ...?!
ARE YOU ...?

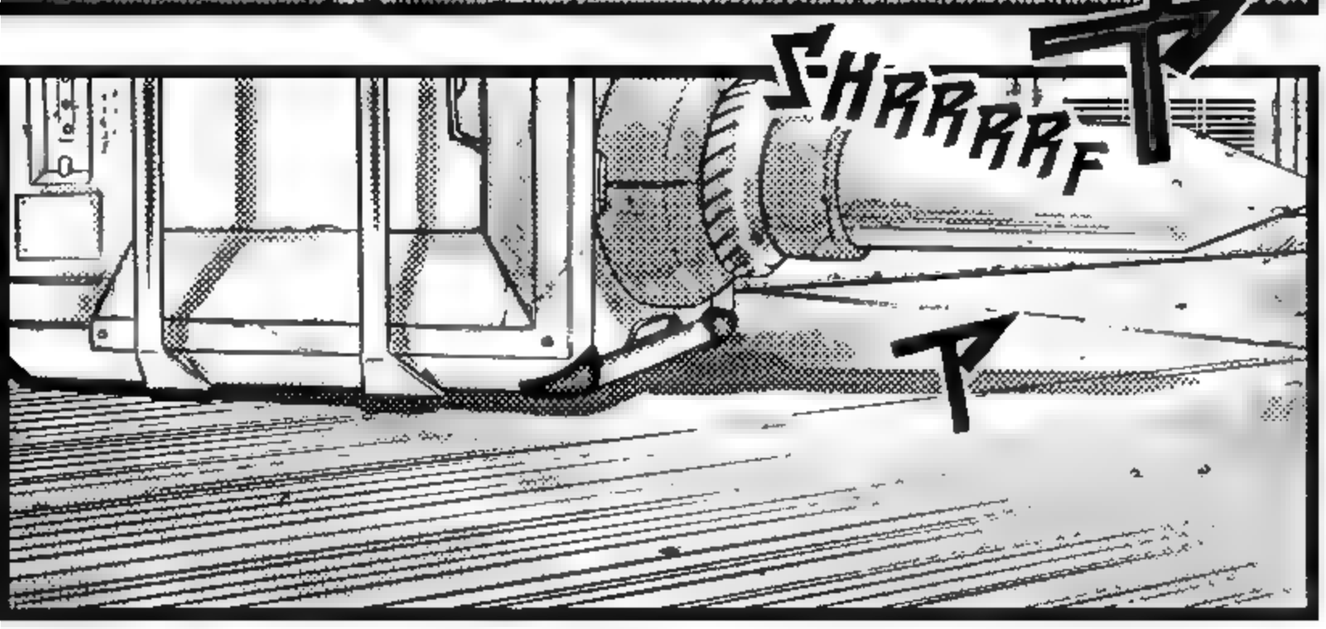

TCH!
ASHIIK
VRMMM
ASHIIK
IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE GUY INSIDE WHETHER THE WALLS HOLD OUT OR NOT.
AND UNFORTUNATELY FOR ME, THIS MECHA IS BUILT FOR UNDERSEA WORK.
MUCH MORE OF THIS...
CREAK
I NEED A PLAN, AND FAST...
!!
...AND THE WALLS ON THIS IRON COFFIN WILL RIP WIDE OPEN.
CREEEAK




KSHNK
VRSH...
WELL, WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

MAN, OH MAN, THE THINGS PEOPLE LEAVE JUST LYIN' AROUND...

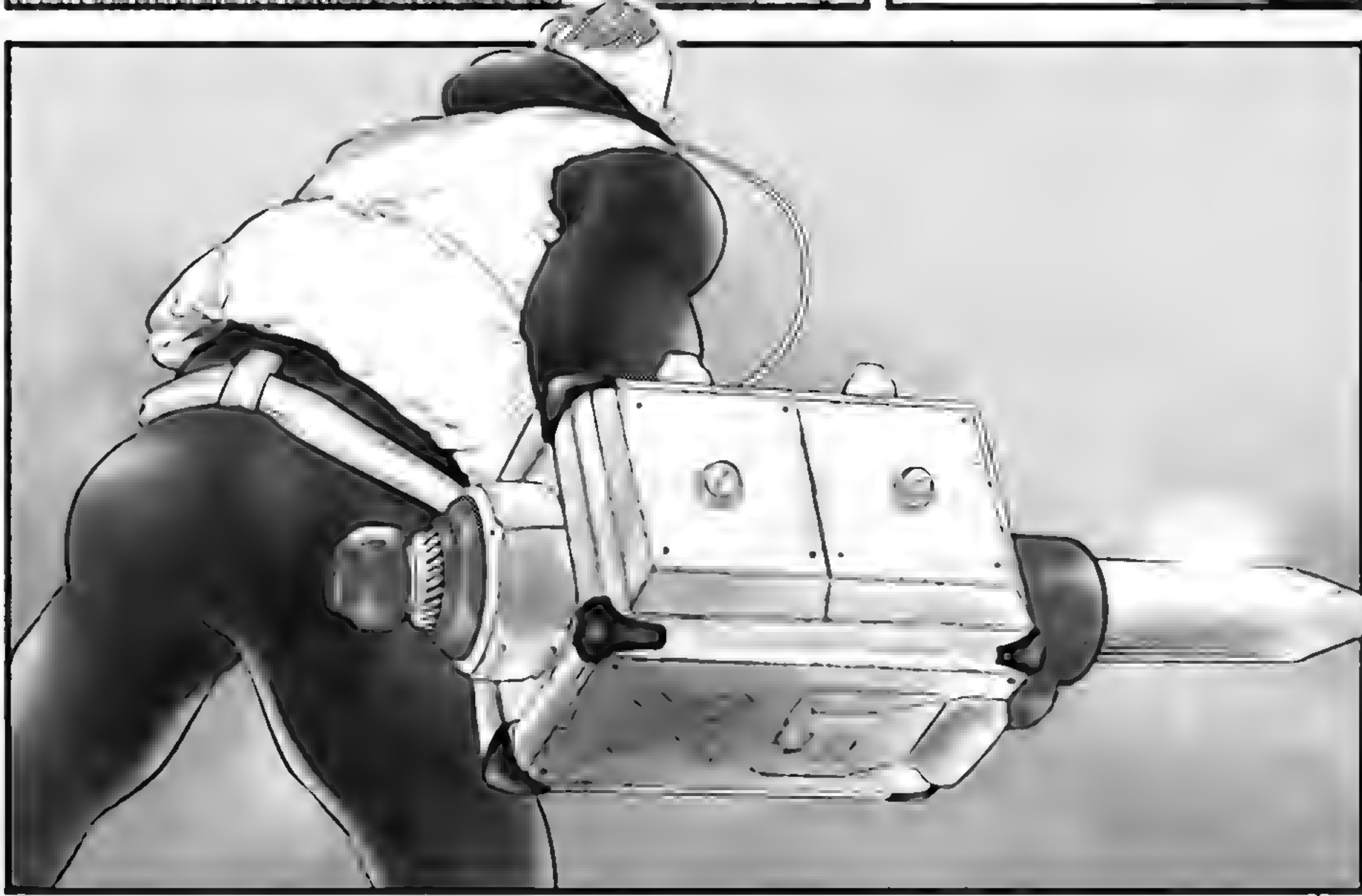



S-HRRRRRF

PSHHHHH
ALL RIGHT. YOU WANNA PLAY?
GIMME A SEC TO GET READY.

FWAH

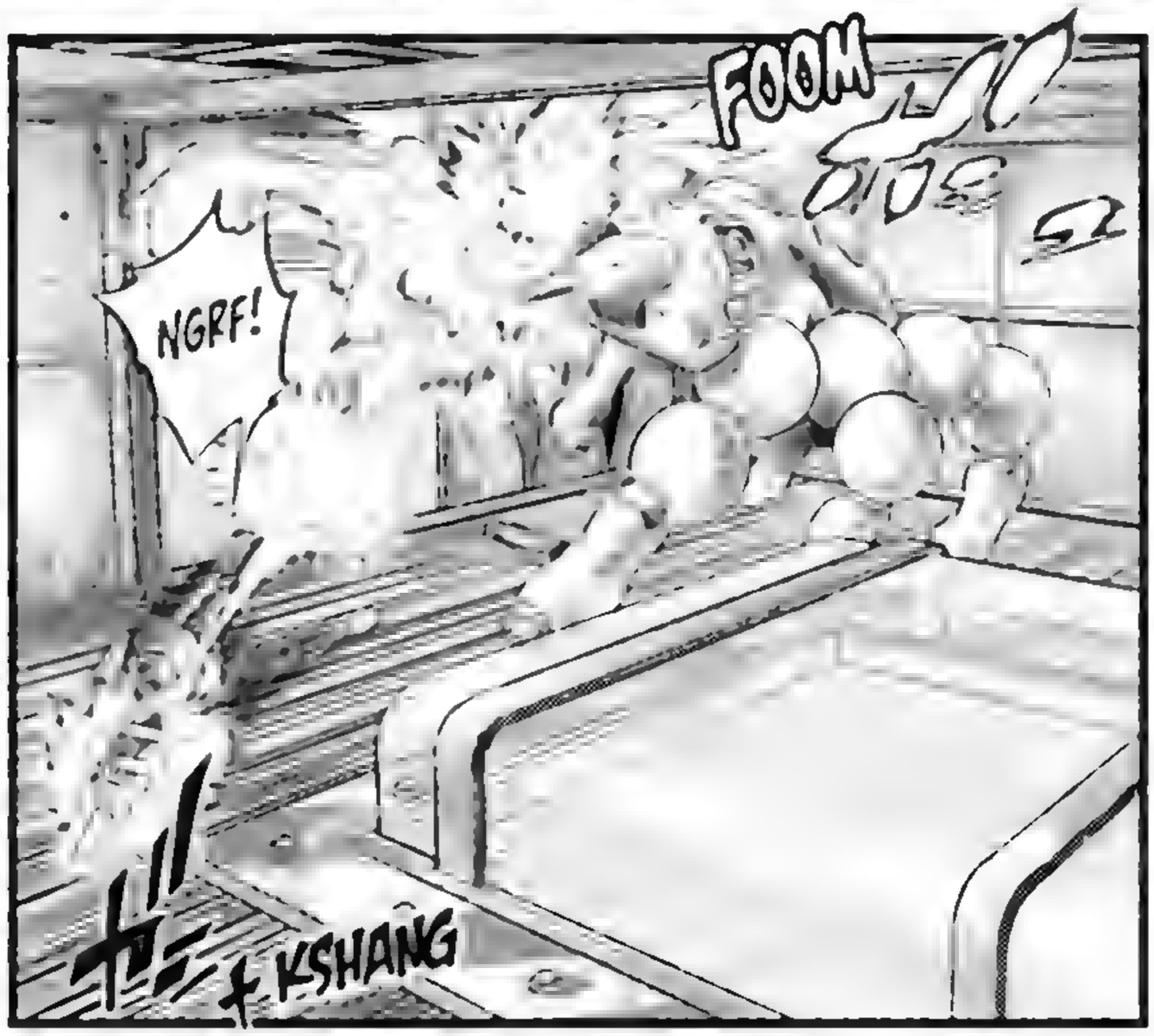
SNNNNNT



HEY!
NO PEEKIN' TILL I'M DONE!
THMP
THMP

I'VE GOT A PILOT DRILL WITH *YOUR* NAME ON IT!
OKAY. BRING IT ON!

OOF. THAT'S SOME KICK...
I'M FEELIN' IT THROUGH MY WHOLE PROS-THETIC.

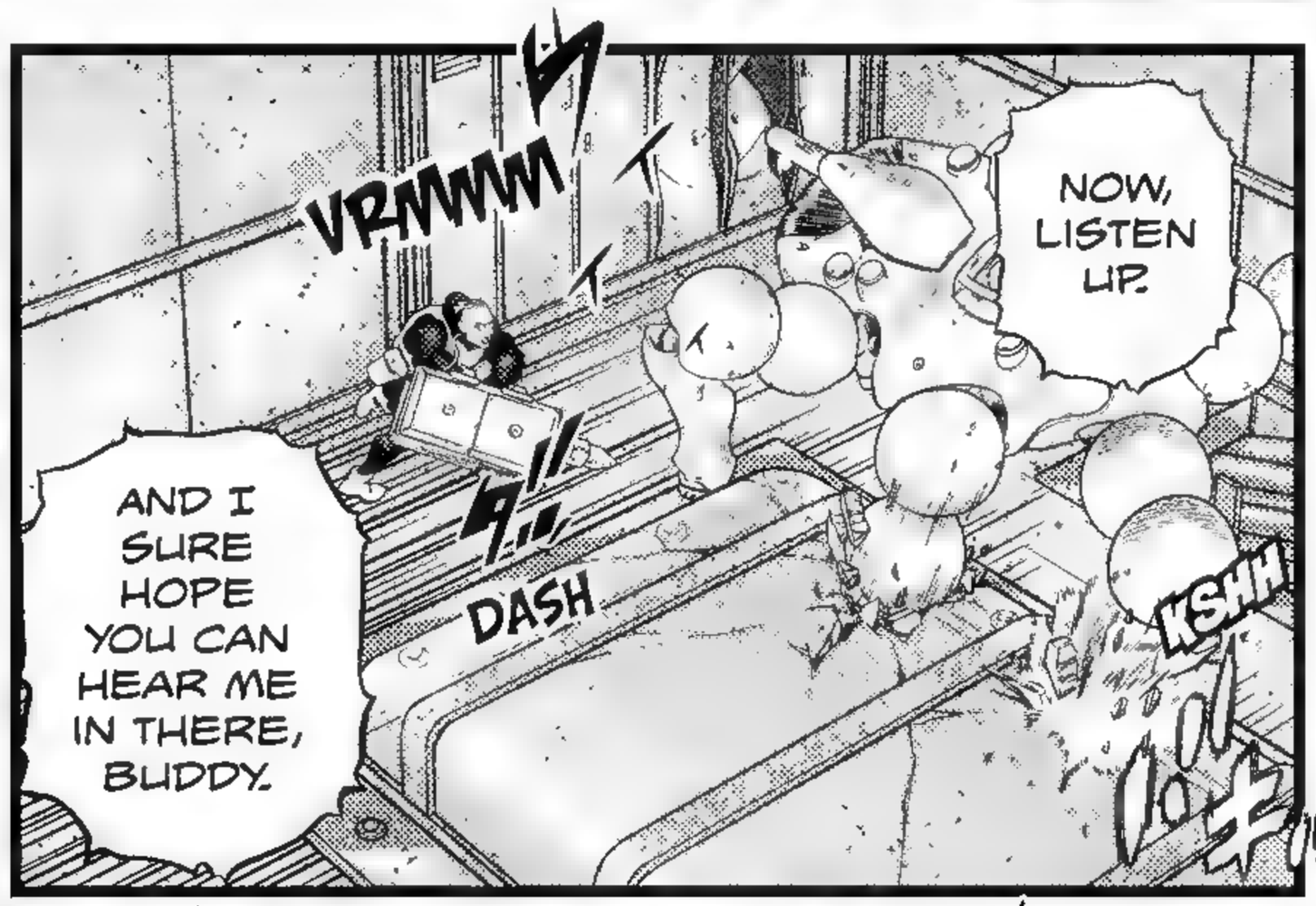

FOOM
NGRF!
KSHANG

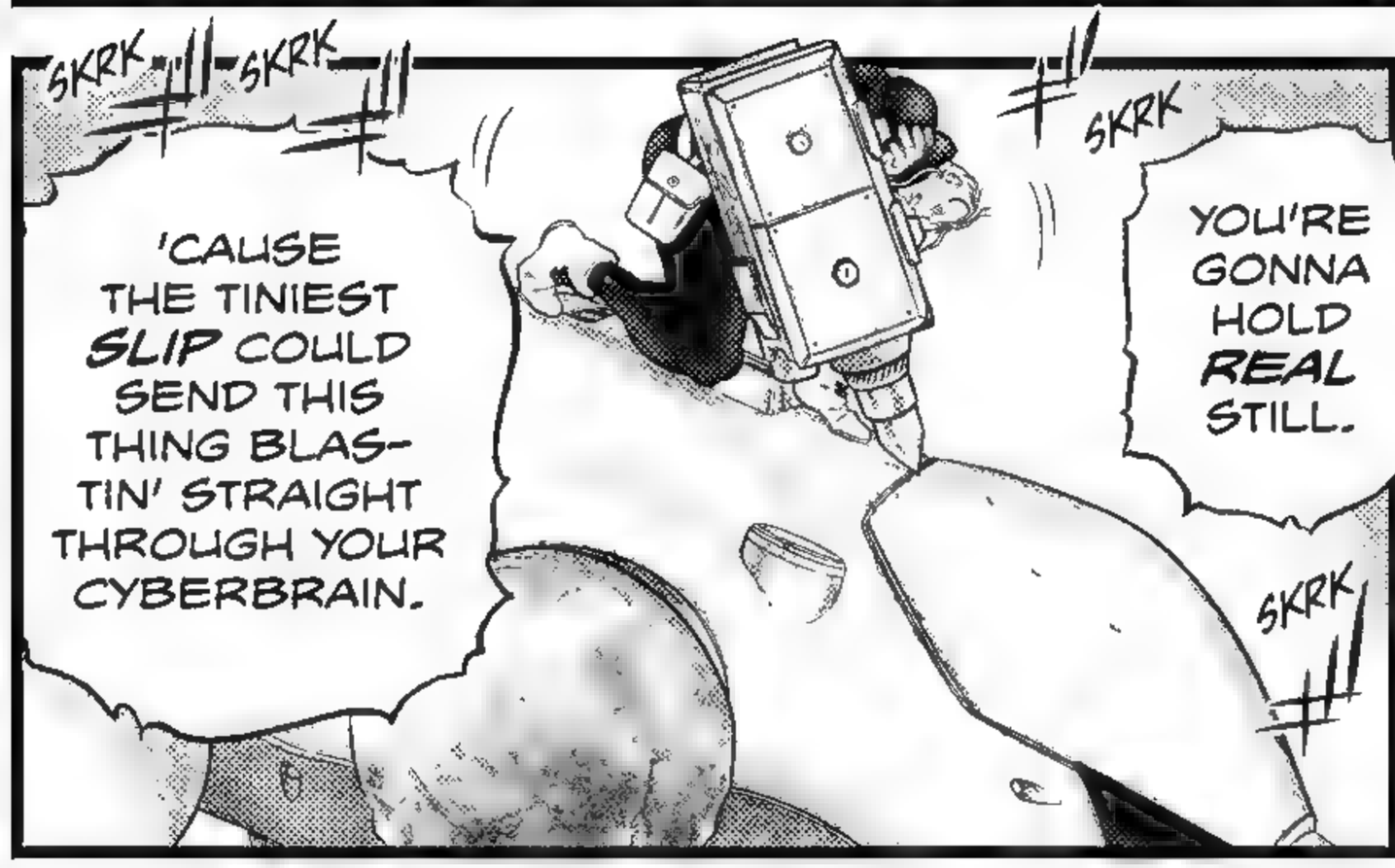
LURCH
KSHH
!
SKKKRT...

I'VE PROBABLY ONLY GOT ONE MORE OF THOSE IN ME AT BEST...

YEAH! SERVES YOU RIGHT FOR TRYIN' TO PICK A *FIGHT* IN THAT THING!

HRAH!
BWOOOOM


VRMMM
NOW, LISTEN UP.
AND I SURE HOPE YOU CAN HEAR ME IN THERE, BUDDY.
DASH
KSHH


SKRK
SKRK
SKRK
SKRK
'CAUSE THE TINIEST *SLIP* COULD SEND THIS THING BLAS-TIN' STRAIGHT THROUGH YOUR CYBERBRAIN.
YOU'RE GONNA HOLD *REAL* STILL.

CLAMP

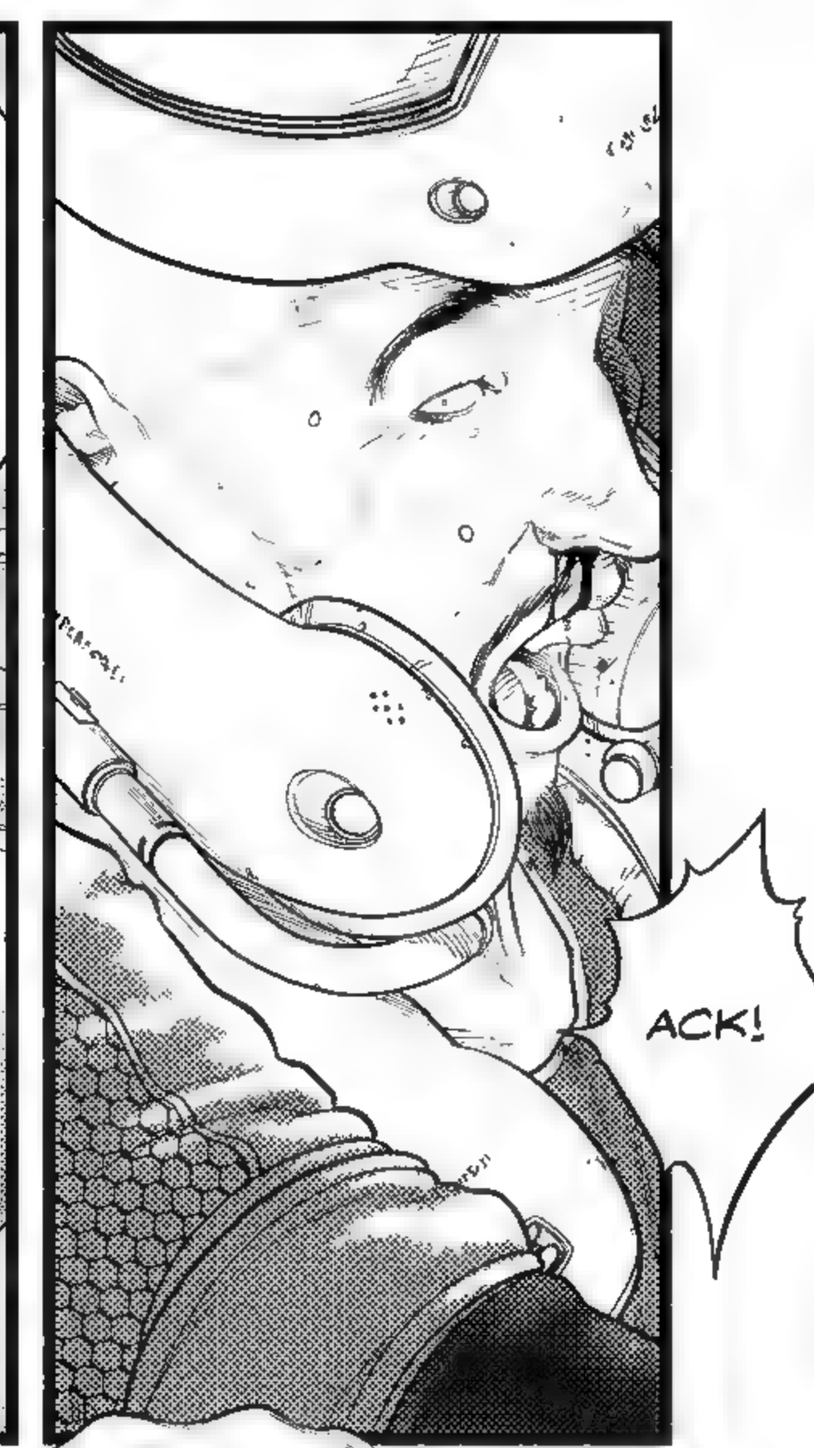
GRAAAH!
GRK!
PANK
PANK

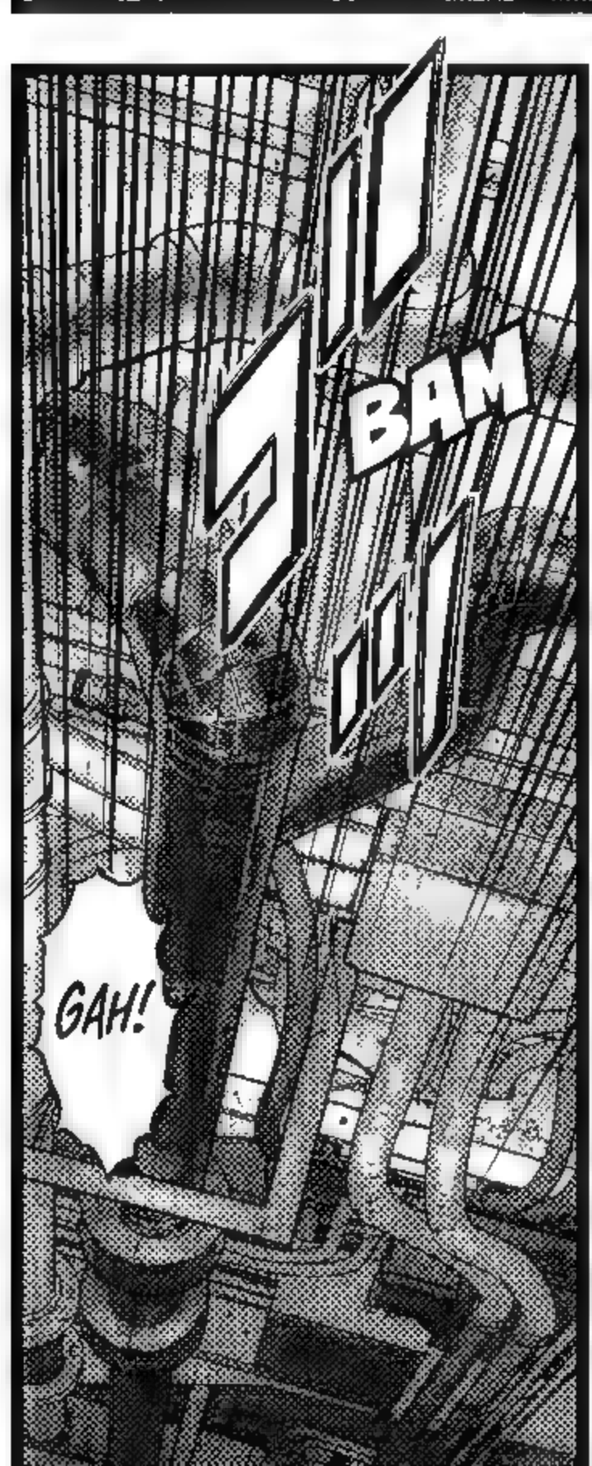
SPLK
SPLK
HAH! LOOK AT ME, TAKIN' A PAGE FROM THE MAJOR'S PLAYBOOK!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE!

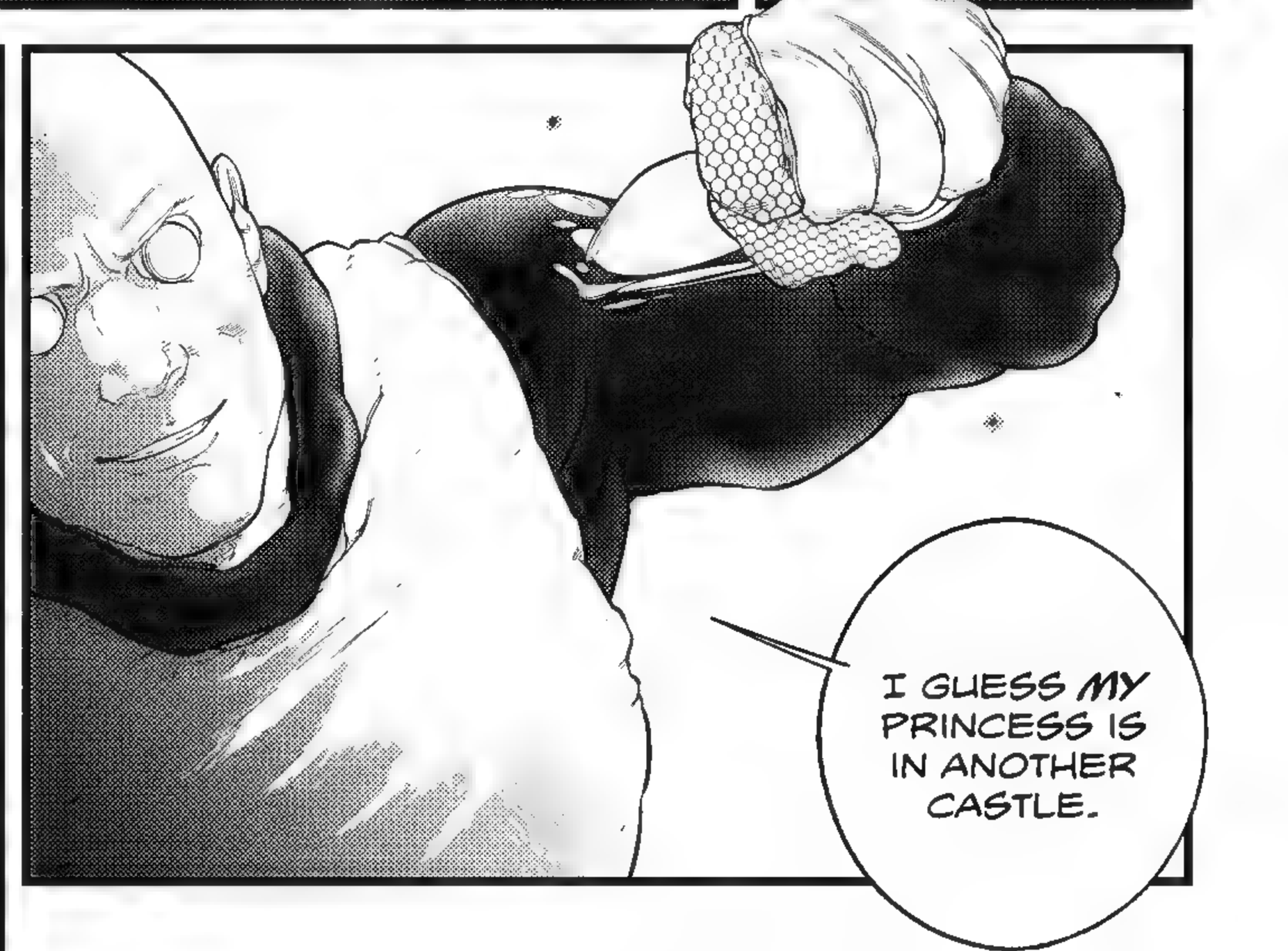
THWOCK!!
GRK!
YANK
OPEN UP, YOU SON-OVABITCH!
HFF...
HFF...
SKREEK...
THAT'S ONE HELL OF A TURTLE SHELL.
SO DO I FINALLY GET TO MEET THE PRINCESS OF THIS DAMN HELLHOLE?

WHAP

AW, GEEZ. THAT'S ONE UGLY MUG.
YOU BAS-TARD!
AND HERE I WAS, GETTIN' ALL EXCITED.
LET GO OF ME!

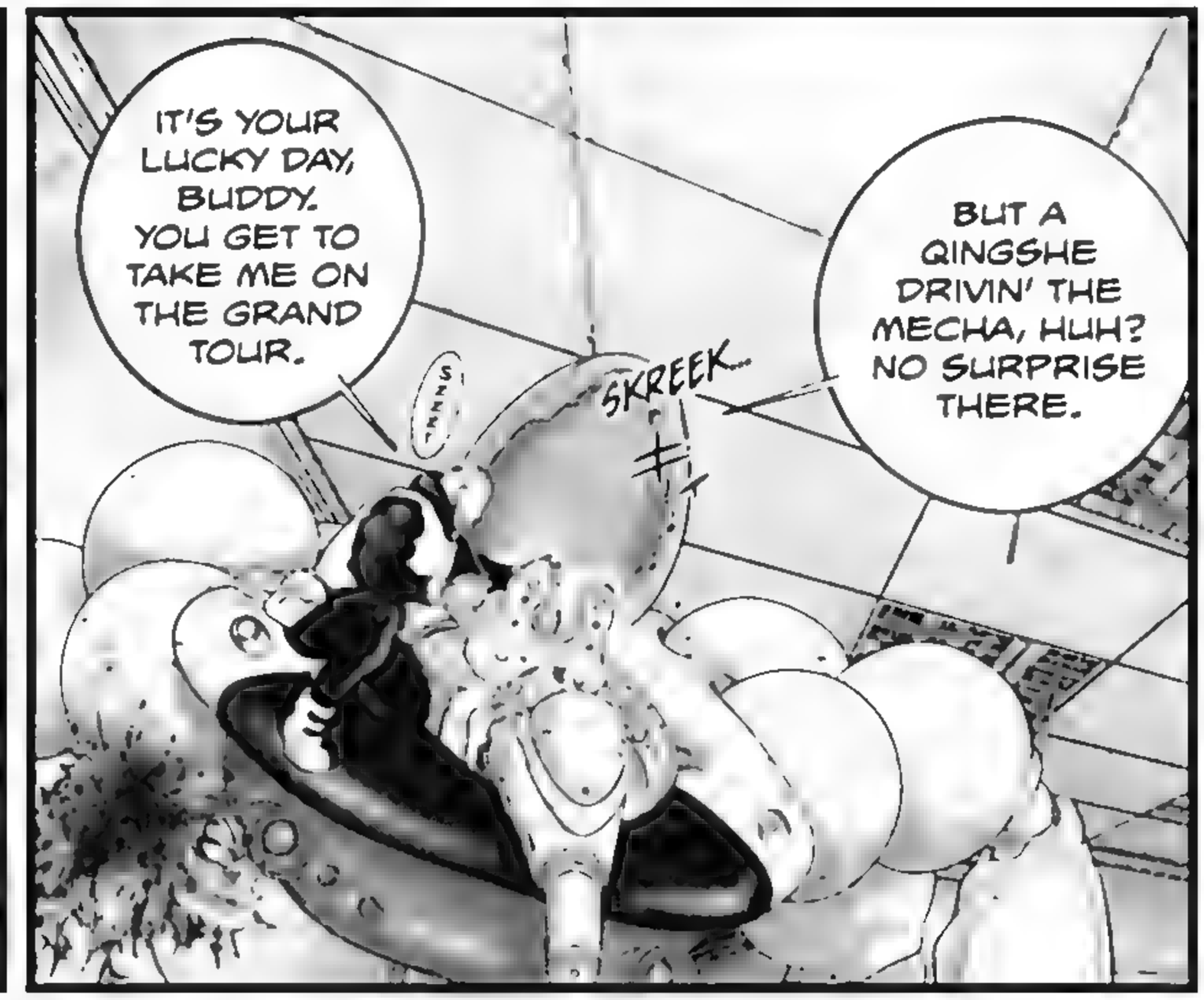

ACK!


BAM
GAH!


I GUESS MY PRINCESS IS IN ANOTHER CASTLE.

SAID IT BEFORE, AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN.

DAMN SAD EXCUSE FOR A DRAGON PALACE.



FWUM
YUP. THERE HE IS.
THE QINGSHE BOSS. PRETTY CLEAR WHO'S RUNNIN' THE SHOW HERE.
JUST YOU WAIT.
SOMETHIN' TELLS ME THAT REMATCH OF OURS IS COMIN' UP REAL SOON.

IT'S THE MAJOR...

SO SHE PAID THIS PLACE A VISIT, TOO, HUH?

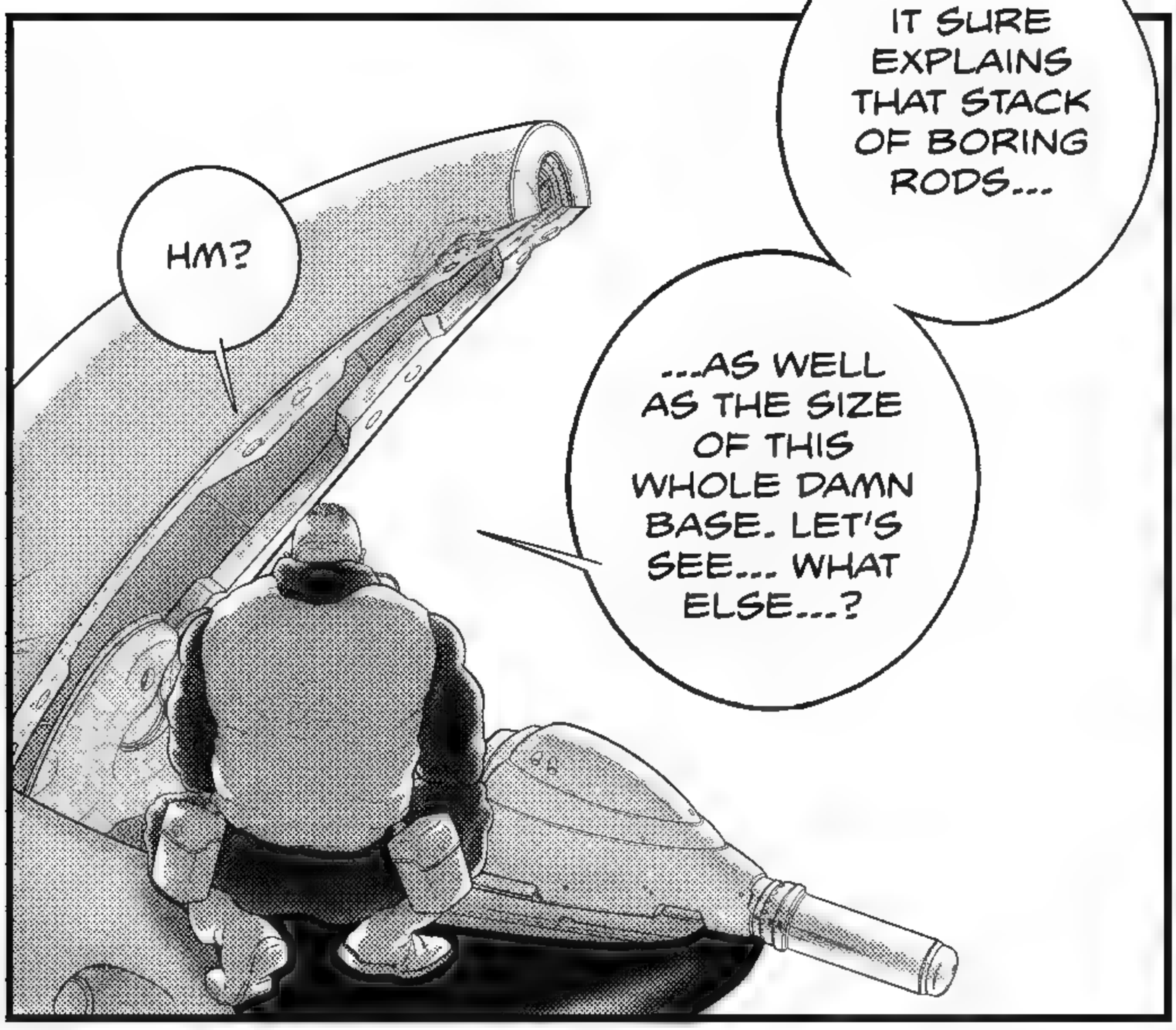
GEEZ. FILL US IN, WOULD YA?

OOH!

BINGO. A NICE, LONG LOOK AT THE SUNKEN SHIP AND ALL ITS "TREASURE."

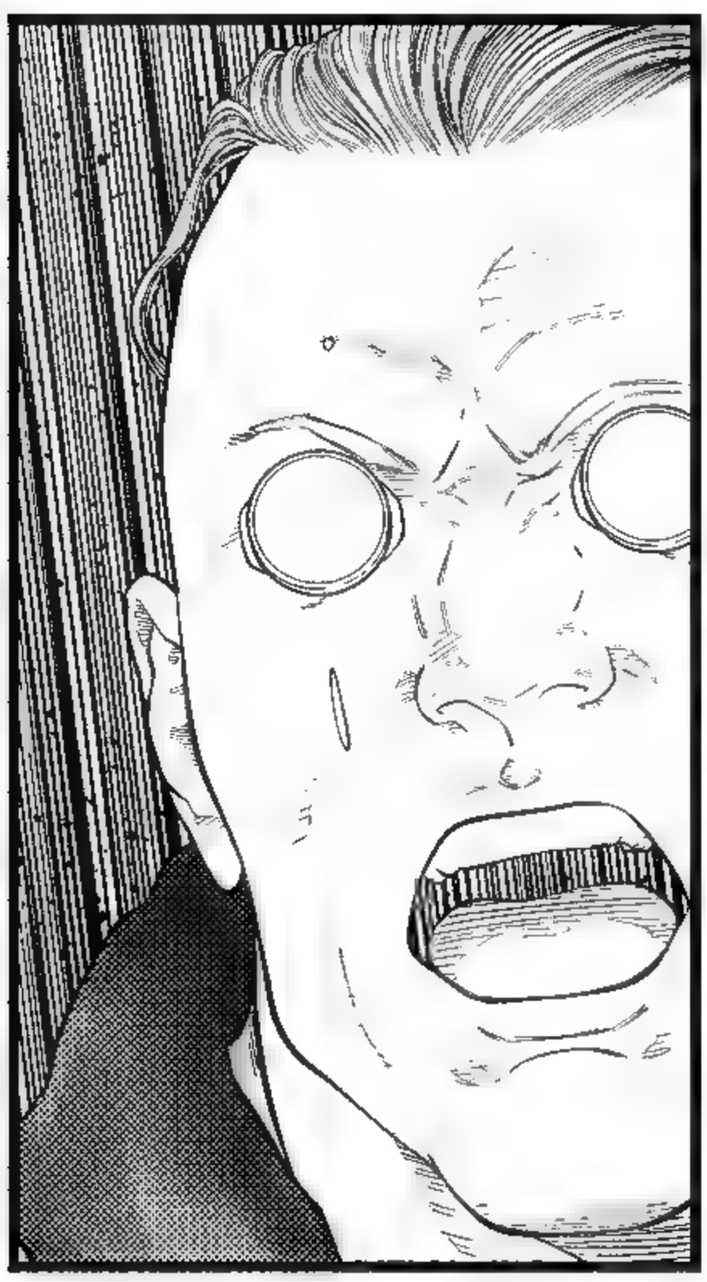
I GUESS YOU WEREN'T THE PRINCESS AFTER ALL. YOU WERE THE *JEWELED BOX.*

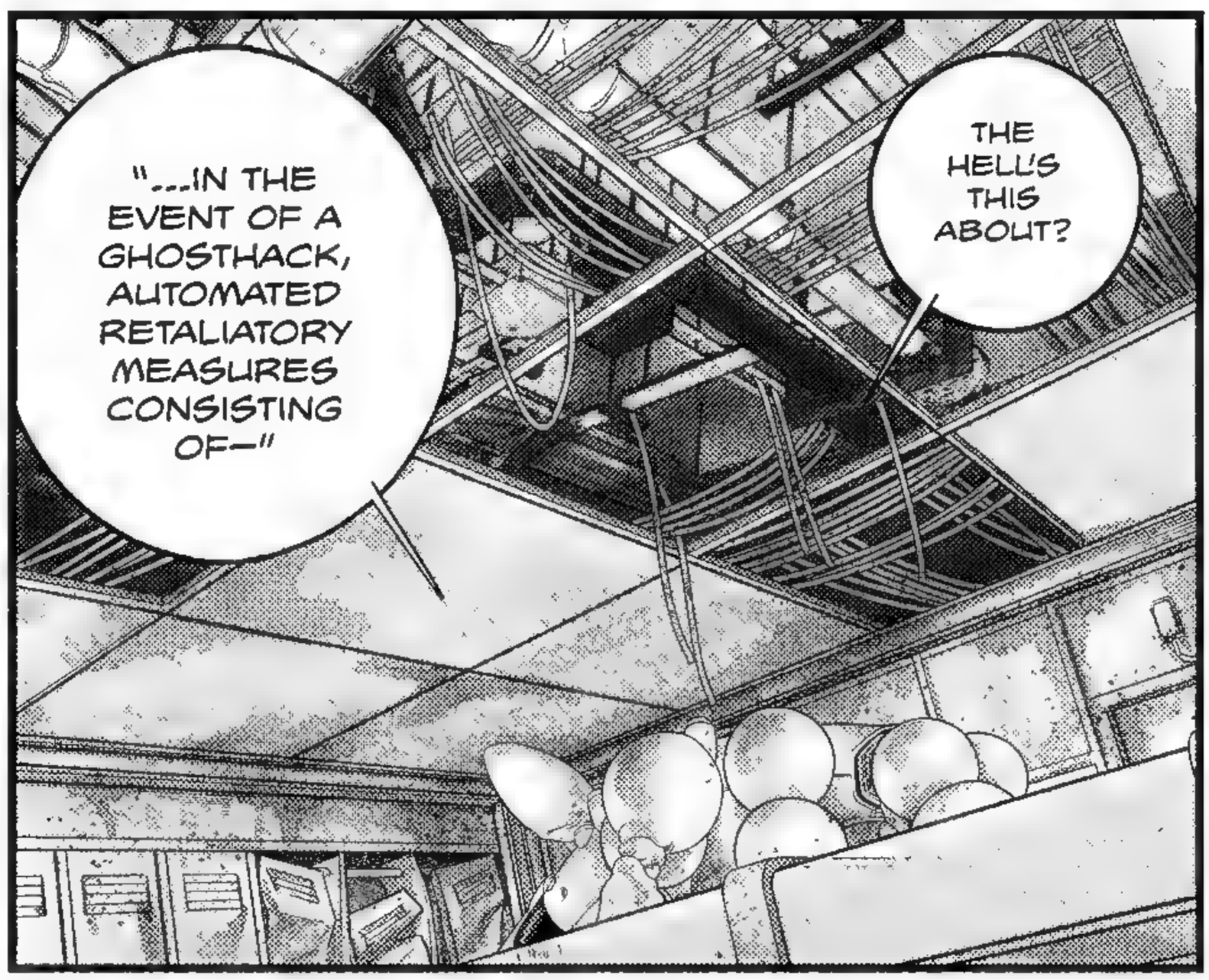
YOU GOT SOME GOOD STUFF IN HERE, BUDDY.

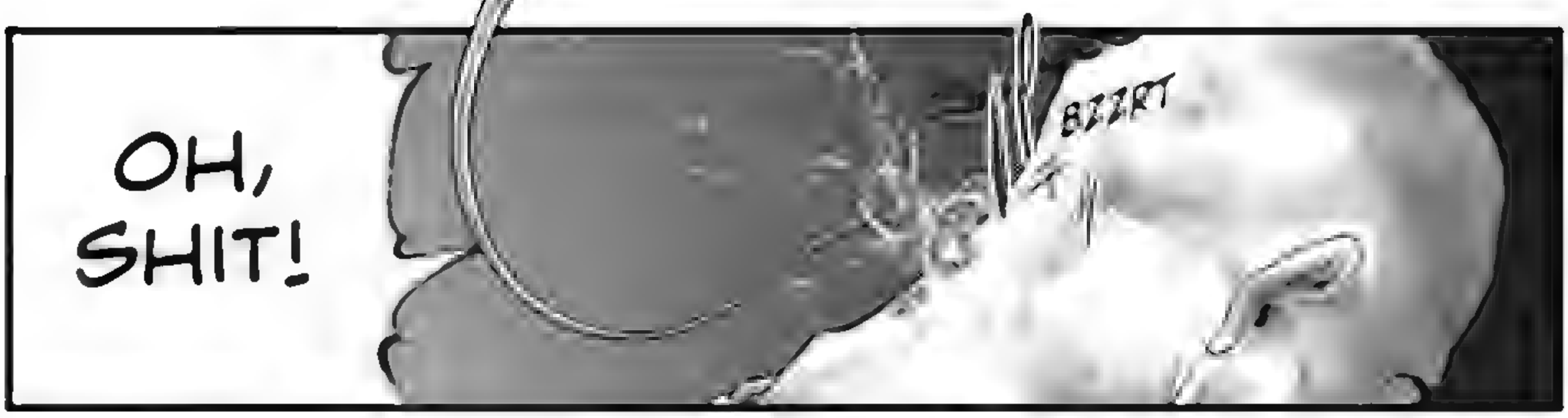

HM?
IT SURE EXPLAINS THAT STACK OF BORING RODS...
...AS WELL AS THE SIZE OF THIS WHOLE DAMN BASE. LET'S SEE... WHAT ELSE...?

HUH. SO THAT'S THE STORY...
WELL, WE FINALLY KNOW WHAT THE QINGSHE ARE REALLY AFTER.

"CYBER-BRAIN INTEGRITY PROTOCOL" ...?




"...IN THE EVENT OF A GHOSTHACK, AUTOMATED RETALIATORY MEASURES CONSISTING OF—"
THE HELL'S THIS ABOUT?


OH, SHIT!
BZZRT

BROOMM

YOU'RE MY HERO!

OH, MR. SNIPER!

SO? PRETTY SWEET RESCUE, RIGHT? RIGHT?!

I THOUGHT WE WERE *DONE* FOR BACK THERE!

QUIT IT. YOU'RE SMUDGING UP MY RIFLE.

SHOVE

SAITO. WHAT'S THE STATUS ON OUR BEAR?

THWP

THWP

THWP

THWP

WE GOT A HIT. SURVEILLANCE CAM AT A HIGHWAY REST AREA.

HE'S ON THE MOVE. WEST-BOUND.

AND HIS *TARGET* IS NONE OTHER THAN OSAKI HEAVY INDUSTRIES' DEAR PRINCESS.

SHINRA MIKOMOTO.

WEST, HUH?

THEN HE'S ON HIS WAY TO NEW PORT.

...

WAKAI PULLS THE STRINGS, AND THE WHITE BEAR DANCES THE JIG.

CLUTCH

FUCHIKOMA, FILL US IN ON THE OFFICIANT. WHAT'S HE BEEN UP TO?

WE HAVE TO STOP HIM!!

LEAN-I-N

TOGUSA! I...!

YEAH. WE JUST MADE IT OUT OF THE UNCON-NECTED ZONE.

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET THROUGH TO YOU!

OH! MR. TOGUSA!

KSHNK

STAY ON THEM. BUT ONLY AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T TAKE YOU OUT OF COMMS RANGE.

KSHNK

ROGER!

WAKAI'S BEEN TAKEN CAPTIVE BY OTOMO. HE'S BEING LED AWAY RIGHT NOW! WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

CHANCES ARE THEY'RE HEADED TO OSAKI.

AS FOR US... IT'S TIME TO BREAK OUT THE BEAR TRAP.

WET WORK'S NOT OUR THING. NOT IF WE CAN AVOID IT.

THEN WHAT'RE YOU—

YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY THINK WE CAN TAKE HIM ALIVE, DO YOU?

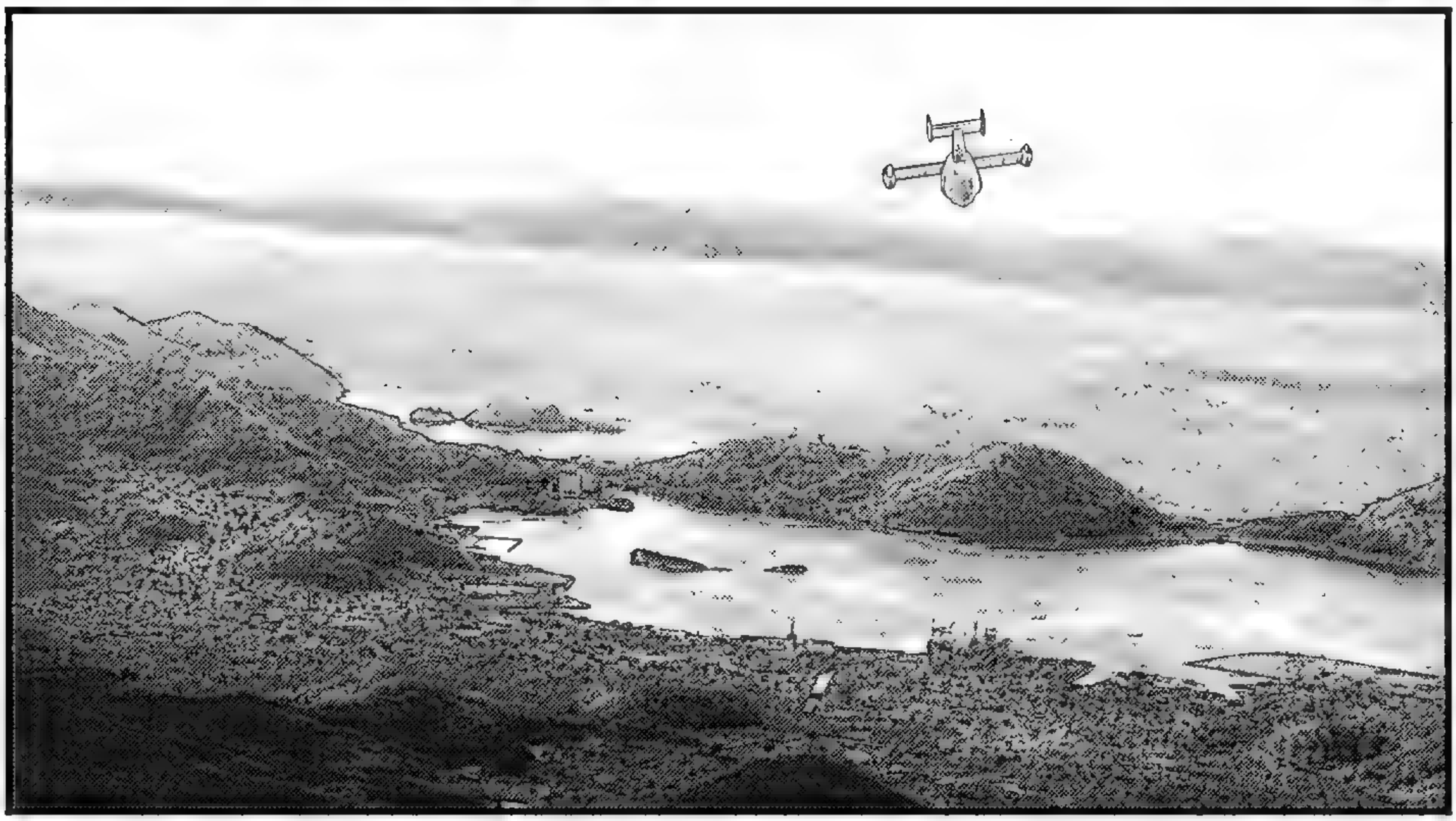
ARE YOU GONNA *KILL* HIM?

?!

F-FOR BEARY-BEAR? DOES THAT MEAN...

ALL I KNOW IS THAT IF PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, I'M PULLING THE TRIGGER.

DON'T FORGET. AS PART OF SECTION 9, OUR **JOB** IS TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T COME TO THAT.



TO BE CONTINUED.....

The Ghost in the Shell The Human Algorithm 2

Kodansha Digital Edition

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